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Hafa Adai!

$1

# Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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# Damaging winds possible through Thursday

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The National Weather Service in Guam warns that damaging winds are possible for the Marianas through Thursday as a result of an approaching synoptic low-pressure system.

*See WINDS on Page 4*

## Fire leaves retail store in ruins

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

A fire believed to be caused by faulty electrical work set ablaze the inside of a retail store in Garapan over the weekend, leaving it in shambles.

The fire ignited inside Hong Yuan Department Store, a retail shop located

*See FIRE on Page 4*

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
Hong Yuan Department Store, a local retail shop known for its low-cost clothing items, fell victim to a fire believed to be caused by faulty electrical work.

## IN BOOST PROBE

## House committee okays subpoena dates for ex-Finance chief, 3 others

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Yumul

The House of Representatives ad-hoc committee that is looking into the previous administration's Building Optimism, Opportunity and Stability Together grant program decided yesterday to issue the dates in the subpoenas for former Finance secretary David DLG Atalig and three others to appear and testify.

Members of the Special Committee on Federal Assistance and Disaster Related Funding agreed in favor of Rep. Edwin K. Propst's (D-Saipan) motion

*See HOUSE on Page 4*

## Senate refers new MPLT line-of-credit bill to FA committee

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Senate decided during a session yesterday to refer to the Fiscal Affairs Committee a bill that repeals and re-enacts a just-enacted law that authorizes a $15-million line of credit with the Marianas Public Land Trust.

*See SENATE on Page 4*

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), extreme left, explains during a Senate session yesterday why they need to refer to the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee a House of Representatives bill that repeals and re-enacts a just-enacted law that authorizes a $15-million line of credit with the Marianas Public Land Trust.

## INSIDE

### LOCAL
Nauru said it's switching diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China, a move that reduces the dwindling number of Taiwan's diplomatic allies.
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### NATION
Communities across the nation celebrated the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday on Monday with acts of service, prayer services and parades.
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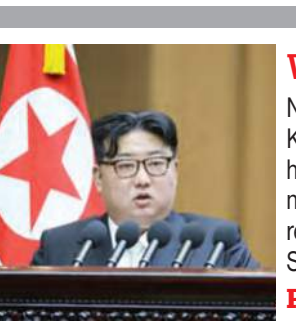

### WORLD
North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said his country would no longer pursue reconciliation with South Korea.
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Local

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Community Development Institute Program manager Geraldine Sasamoto, CDI Administrative manager Pamela Ada, Saipan Chamber of Commerce board member Brad Ruszala, Chamber EdWork Committee member Carlos Santos, Chamber executive director Kimberly Camacho, Chamber president Joe Guerrero, Chamber vice president Joshua Wise, Chamber coordinators Riley Buenaventura and Jaime Itibus, and CDI director Monique Sablan.

# Chamber partners with NMC-CDI

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is happy to announce an innovative partnership with the Community Development Institute under the Northern Marianas College, aimed at furthering the professional development opportunities available to its members and the general public.

For many years, Island Training Solutions has been the main facilitator of professional development programs for Chamber members. However, recognizing the evolving needs of its diverse membership base, the Chamber sought to expand its opportunities. This has led to the integration of CDI into the professional development environment, bringing a fresh perspective and a new set of courses for members to choose from.

Chamber executive director Kimberly Camacho stated, "We are thrilled to welcome CDI into our network. This partnership is a strategic move to diversify our professional development programs and empower our members with a broader range of training options tailored to their unique work environments and needs."

The Chamber extends gratitude to CDI director Monique Sablan for graciously opening her doors to this collaboration. "We appreciate director Sablan's commitment to education and professional development. Her support and enthusiasm for this initiative have made it possible for us to offer these valuable opportunities to our members," said Camacho.

In this collaboration, the Chamber, alongside CDI will be offering a diverse array of courses to enhance professional skills. Acknowledging the importance of continuous learning in the workforce, Camacho emphasized, "Professional development training is a cornerstone in fostering a skilled and adaptable workforce. It ensures that our members stay ahead of industry trends, making them more competitive in the business environment."

Courses to expect from CDI are Artificial Intelligence in the Workplace, Effective Communication in the Workplace, Strategic Leadership, and Effective Management. Camacho expressed excitement about the lineup, noting, "These courses address critical aspects of contemporary business practices, with a particular emphasis on Artificial Intelligence, a topic at the forefront of many industries."

For more information on the professional development opportunities offered by the Chamber, interested parties are encouraged to contact the Chamber office at 670-234-7150 or via email at contactus@saipanchamber.org.

The Chamber looks forward to the positive impact this partnership will have on its members and the broader business community, fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation.

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit organization whose mission is to empower our enterprises as a resource, advocate, and connector for Saipan's private sector. Its vision is to create an island where businesses, families, and communities succeed as one. For more information or to learn how to become a Chamber member, visit online at www.saipanchamber.com, call 234-7150, or visit the second floor of the Marianas Business Plaza (Suite 201-A). ***(Chamber)***

## EARTHQUAKE BRIEFS

### 5.0-magnitude earthquake in Pagan

At 1:07pm on Jan. 12, 2024, a 5.0-magnitude earthquake occurred at the Pagan region, Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. ***(PR)***

### 5.0-magnitude earthquake in NMI

At 8:44am on Jan. 11, 2024, a 5.0-magnitude earthquake occurred at the Northern Mariana Islands region. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. ***(PR)***

### 4.9-magnitude earthquake in San Jose Village

At 12:31am on Jan. 10, 2024, a 4.9-magnitude earthquake occurred at San Jose Village, Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. ***(PR)***

# Another $1.4M writ issued against IPI's personal property

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has issued another writ of execution against Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's personal property totaling over $1.4 million in favor of a group of IPI creditors.

Last Friday, U.S. District Court for the NMI Clerk of Court Heather Kennedy issued a writ of execution against IPI's personal property in favor of IPI creditors USA Fanter Corp., Artman Corp., and James Whang dba South Pacific Lumber Company.

The writ of execution authorizes the seizure and sale of IPI's personal property to satisfy the unpaid judgments the court previously granted for each creditor in their respective lawsuits against the casino investor.

When combined, the unsatisfied judgments equal about $1,402,126.88.

Specifically, back on March 20, 2023, the court granted a $500,000 judgment in favor of USA Fanter, a $106,890 judgment in favor of Artman Corp. on Jan. 17, 2023, and a $795,236.88 judgment in favor of James Whang in two separate cases.

The writ mandates that the amount raised should not exceed $1,402,126.88 plus post-judgment interest, costs, and fees. All funds raised will be deposited into the court's registry where proceeds shall remain until after IPI has had an opportunity for an exemptions hearing, the court's order states.

Originally, the application for this writ of execution included other IPI creditors who were awarded significant judgments by the CNMI Superior Court. The creditors are Fujitec Pacific Inc., Hemine Ipwan Islam dba IPWAN Security Services, and GT Building Systems International Ptd. However, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona later excluded them, saying these three creditors only have state court judgments—not federal court judgments.

"Here, the CNMI judgment creditors do not have federal court judgments. Nor do they seek to register their judgments under an applicable federal statute. Because it is clear 'Rule 69 is not available to enforce state court judgments in federal court,' and the CNMI judgment creditors seek to enforce state court judgments pursuant to Rule 69, the court denies the application for writ of execution as to the CNMI judgment creditors. Rule 69 is not a vehicle through which federal courts can enforce state court judgments, which is exactly what the CNMI judgment creditors are attempting to accomplish," Manglona said in her order.

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's Imperial Pacific Resort in Garapan is seen here in this file photo.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

# Online registration for Feb. spay/neuter clinic

CONTRBUTED PHOTO

Visiting vet Dr. Whitney Collins performs surgery on someone's pet last June at the Saipan Mayor's Animal Shelter in As Perdido. This Feb. 5-15, a spay/neuter clinic under the Saipan Humane Society will be held at the Koblerville Community Center.

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Online registration for the spay/neuter clinic set for Feb. 5-15 is now live at saipanhumanesociety.org/. From the home page, click the button that says "Request an appointment" and follow the instructions.

The clinic will be at the Koblerville Community Center. Drop off your pets between 7:30 and 8am and the last pick-up time is at 4pm.

The visiting veterinarian this time is Dr. Jessica Nelson and licensed veterinary technician Lauren Ruiz.

The prices for services are as follows: $50 for male cat, $75 for female cat, male/female dog. Price varies for specialty surgeries (amputation, eye removal, etc.).

Saipan Humane Society is expecting to service 20-28 patients daily and slots are filling up, so register now.

SHS executive director Lauren Cabrera said she's worked with both Nelson and Ruiz and they are "absolutely wonderful."

SHS is "excited to work with and learn from them both," said Cabrera. "Dr. Nelson has been a wonderful supporter of what we are doing."

Cabrera added that the two's flight will be generously covered by SHS' partners at Banfield Foundation. "We will be working in collaboration with Dog Control Program staff and one to two volunteers from Guam Animals In Need, along with our SHS staff/volunteers, to make this clinic possible," said Cabrera.

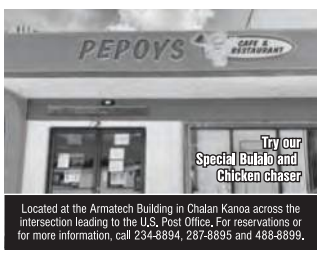
The clinic is also looking for volunteers. The minimum age is 16 years old. You can choose full or half-day shifts and lend a helping hand in check-ins, recovery, or preparation. The full day schedule is from 7am to 4pm and the half-day schedule is either from 7am to 12pm, or 12pm to 4pm.

Email info@saipanhumanesociety.org with the subject 'VOLUNTEER'. "Let's work together to create a better future for our furry friends!" said SHS's social media post.

SHS said sterilization is the first defense in sustainable animal population control. Sterilizing your pets will improve animal welfare on the island by reducing the number of puppies and kittens born.

Additionally, it reduces the risk of certain deadly illnesses and cancers such as pyometra (uterine infection) and mammary (breast) cancer. Your pet will also experience a happier life if they are not constantly fighting the urge to go wander and find a mate. They may leave your property less, and be more loyal companions focused on their duties as a pet or guard animal rather than focused on reproducing.

The last time SHS hosted a spay/neuter clinic was in August and serviced over 150 pets.



Located at the Armatech Building in Chalan Kanoa across the intersection leading to the U.S. Post Office. For reservations or for more information, call 234-8894, 287-8895 and 488-8899.

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COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-24-005

OFFICE SPACE LEASE FOR CUC ROTA's ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS & OPERATIONS

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the lease of a suitable office and operations support facility for the Headquarters of CUC's Administration and Operations on the island of Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The proposed office space must comply with American Disabilities Act (ADA), DPW, OSHA and CNMI Zoning regulation.

The IFB package may be obtained at the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration with CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The IFB package will be emailed to the registered Proponents email ID. For registration inquiries, please email Marcela Tenorio, CUC Senior Administrative Technician via email address, marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

**One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies** must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-IFB-24-005, Office Space Lease for CUC Rota's Administrative Functions and Operations."* to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 9, 2024,** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on January 18, 2024 to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Alvin King, CUC Rota Resident Manager at email address alvin.king@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio at marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

# Torres: CNMI will be well-served by Tenorio on the bench

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The people of the Commonwealth will be well-served by deputy attorney general Lillian A. Tenorio on the bench, given her competence and commitment to the rule of law and equal access to justice in the CNMI courts, according to veteran lawyer Robert T. Torres.

In his letter Monday to Senate Executive Appointments and Government Investigations Committee chair Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), Torres said his experience with Tenorio showed him that she maintains the highest standard of professionalism and sets a standard of excellence and competence for herself at all times.

"She approaches every issue, case, or litigation with careful review. Ms. Tenorio then reviews the applicable case law, statute, or regulation at issue," said the lawyer, adding that from there she will draft with thorough diligence and review the analysis to ensure the quality of the work in every aspect.

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has nominated Tenorio to serve on the Superior Court. If confirmed, she will succeed former associate judge Wesley Bogdan, who retired last month.

Torres said Tenorio's strengths are research, drafting, and analysis.

As a practitioner before CNMI courts, he said there is every reason to be confident that litigants and parties appearing before Tenorio as an associate judge will receive this kind of preparation and product—the standard expected of every jurist.

Another aspect of Tenorio that Torres believes makes her ready to assume the bench is her legal and non-legal experience.

He said Tenorio's legal career started after several years working in the CNMI then going to law school at the University of Mexico.

The lawyer said Tenorio worked in public policy at the CNMI Legislature.

After law school, Tenorio clerked for CNMI Supreme Court Justice John A. Manglona, both at the Superior Court and then the Supreme Court.

Torres said that when he returned to private practice after his short foray as attorney general, Tenorio also returned to private practice and they shared offices with their separate law firms.

"Our Commonwealth will be well-served well with Ms. Tenorio on the Superior Court bench," he said.

## FIRE

*From page 1*

in the heart of Garapan that's known for its low-priced clothes that range from active wear to formal wear.

According to one of the store's owners, who agreed to speak on the condition that she not be named, she believes the fire was caused by faulty electrical work. She explained that when one of the store's workers plugged a wire into an outlet, it popped, which ultimately started the fire.

*Saipan Tribune* got a glimpse of the building's interior and the inside was covered in black ashes. Some of the retail store's workers could be seen salvaging what was left of the goods.

*Saipan Tribune* learned that the owners do not intend to relocate and may just renovate the establishment.

The Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services has yet to release an official report on its investigation of the fire.

"At this time, the cause of the fire remains under investigation and will be determined at a later date," a DFEMS statement said.

According to the official DFEMS news release, multiple callers to DFEMS reported a possible structure fire at the Hong Yuan Department Store in Garapan at around 9:12am on Sunday, Jan. 14. DFEMS responded to the incident about a minute later.

A DFEMS team arrived at the scene at around 9:14am and immediately sized up the scene and reported that the whole first floor was affected by the fire.

Another DFEMS team also ensured that all individuals living on the second floor of the building had been evacuated.

When other units arrived, firefighters entered the front of the building while others circled the building to check on the ventilating windows on the sides.

A back door was discovered where another fire in the building was raging, and a second entry was conducted to battle the fire.

At 10:12am, shift commander Fire captain John Mettao stated that the crews on the scene had the fire under control.

Investigators from the Division of Fire Prevention and Arson Investigation arrived on the scene shortly after to investigate and assess the cause.

## HOUSE

*From page 1*

to allow committee chair Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan) to issue the dates recommended to subpoena Atalig, and contractors Salina Sapp, Robert Travilla, and Shayne Villanueva.

Travilla and Villanueva were in charge of the BOOST Program's marketing.

The specific dates were not mentioned as committee members discussed it in an executive session.

House legal counsel Joseph Taijeron clarified that Yumul has the latitude to work with him and any lawyers these witnesses may have so that they can work on a reasonably accommodating schedule.

All nine committee members present at the meeting also agreed to issue subpoena for television station KSPN2 to obtain documents related to BOOST Program.

The committee recently agreed to subpoena some documents from the local media—*Saipan Tribune, Marianas Variety,* and radio station KKMP—related to advertising the BOOST program.

Propst, who is the committee vice chairman, earlier clarified that the subpoenas do not suggest any wrongdoing on the media's part, but is a normal route to take since the media companies are private entities.

Propst said the media entities were paid for the marketing work they did and the committee would like to find out what is owed these outlets and what was asked of them to perform.

The committee was also created to investigate the American Rescue Plan Act funds.

The current investigation the committee is doing arises from the recommendation of the previous Ways and Means and JGO Committees of the 22nd House of Representatives to continue the BOOST probe.

The two committees had conducted several legislative fact-finding hearings that allegedly resulted "in the discovery of unprecedented levels of corruption and fiscal mismanagement relating to federal funds."

Using $17 million in ARPA money, BOOST was a project of the previous Office of the Governor, Department of Finance, and Department of Commerce. It aimed to provide financial assistance to CNMI businesses and nonprofit organizations, but some lawmakers alleged that it was used by the previous to gain votes in the 2022 gubernatorial election and enrich the previous administration's cronies.

## WINDS

*From page 1*

NWS Guam has issued multiple advisories for the Marianas as a result of this low-pressure system that is making its way to the Marianas from Japan.

Currently, the Marianas has a high wind watch in effect, a high surf advisory, a rip current advisory, and a fire weather watch in effect.

According to NWS' high wind watch advisory, from today through Thursday, the Marianas can expect northeast winds of 25 to 35 mph, and gusts of up to 45 mph is possible. This means damaging winds could blow down trees and power lines, with widespread power outages possible.

In addition, NWS warns that travel could be difficult, especially for high-profile vehicles. NWs explains that this is a result of an extensive synoptic low-pressure system moving off the coast of Japan, in addition to a strong high pressure system following closely behind it.

"[This] will produce a substantially stronger shear line that could bring damaging winds to the region Wednesday," said NWS.

Because of the threat, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios is advising the public to monitor the latest forecasts and warnings for updates on this situation.

"Fasten loose objects or shelter objects in a safe location prior to the onset of winds," the governor advises.

Aside from strong winds, NWS also warns about the high surf brought by the incoming systems and a high risk of rip currents through Friday.

High surf essentially means large breaking waves of 8 to 10 feet, increasing to 12 to 14 feet today along with dangerous rip currents.

These conditions are expected for west and north facing reefs of the Marianas.

NWS advises that these conditions result in dangerous swimming and surfing conditions and localized beach erosion.

"Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water," NWS says.

As for the fire weather watch, NWS warns that this advisory will remain in effect through Thursday as gusty winds will lead to the rapid spread of any fire.

"Any fires that develop will likely spread rapidly. Outdoor burning is not recommended," said the advisory.

## SENATE

*From page 1*

Senate floor leader Sen. Corina L. Magofna (Ind-Saipan) initially moved to pass House Bill 23-95, House Substitute 1, but withdrew it after some senators raised concerns about rushing the legislation. Instead, Magofna offered a motion to refer the bill to the Fiscal Affairs Committee. The senators agreed.

Before doing so, Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) said he wants to offer an amendment, but is not prepared to do so that day, as he wants to make sure that Tinian and Rota have a vehicle provision to engage with MPLT on future proposals.

If the bill is not urgent, he said, they can then forward it to a committee so they can continue talks on the proposed amendment he wishes to offer.

Hofschneider pointed out that the Senate had supported the original bill because they saw the gravity and the importance of moving federally-funded projects forward. However, the new bill changes the narrative and even put in additional provisions that they don't have time to discuss just yet, so he is a bit apprehensive about supporting it, Hofschneider said.

Last Nov. 20, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios signed House Bill 23-77, Senate Draft 1, into Public Law 23-12 to authorize the $15-million line of credit. However, the House of Representatives saw a need to fix the new law, hence the introduction of House Bill 23-95, HS1 last Friday, which was introduced by House of Representatives Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan). All 17 House members present at the session passed it on that same day.

Under Villagomez's new legislation, language was added to Public Law 23-12 stating that this legislation authorizes and pledges the funds which MPLT would distribute as interest income to the general fund pursuant to Article 11, Section 6 of the Constitution as security and for repayment of the $15-million line of credit with the Commonwealth government through the Department Finance at an annual interest rate of 5.5%.

The bill also states that the Legislature agrees and consents that MPLT may withhold from its annual interest income distribution to the Commonwealth for each fiscal year as security and to guarantee payment for the $15-million line of credit until that credit facility is retired and fully satisfied.

Senate counsel Joe Bermudes said at the session that House Bill 23-95, HS1 is a repealer and a re-enactment bill, which means that Public Law 23-13 law will be replaced with this one.

"It's almost like this is…'forget about the passed law and read this one.' And this would be the law because it repeals the prior law," Bermudes said.

Sen. Francisco Q. Cruz (R-Tinian) shared the sentiment of Hofschneider. He said they have to pull back this bill and have further discussions.

"I am not content to just move forward on this legislation," Cruz said.

Sen. Dennis James C. Mendiola (R-Rota) also shared the sentiments of Hofschneider and Cruz. He said it is better for the Senate to go back and kind of just try and get those differences between the initial bill that they passed.

Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) said the amendments that were made to the original bill at the Senate was to remove the security of the interest withholding and also to remove 45 days and restore 30 days.

DeLeon Guerrero said this was at MPLT's request to make sure that when the drawdowns are taken from the central government, the federal account monies that they get paid within 30 days before any subsequent withdrawals from the credit line facility is allowed.

Sen. Donald Manglona (Ind-Rota), who chairs the Fiscal Affairs Committee, said he will schedule a committee meeting for Wednesday, Jan. 24, calling the parties involved in this legislation as well as entertain any amendments to the bill.

During the public comments portion of the session, concerned citizen Richard Hofschneider opposed the new bill. He said this $15 million should be set aside and should be diverted directly to the *taotao tano*—the local term for those of NMI descent or the indigenous residents of the CNMI.

"We should not give Gov. Palacios this one. What's he [is going to] to do? He is going to give to the foreign companies? Foreign workers? The CW1?" Richard Hofchneider asked.

He said this money belongs to the *taotao tano*.

Rep. Blas Jonathan T. Attao (Ind-Saipan) said during Friday's session that there are legal issues raised by the administration and MPLT, therefore the intent of this latest bill is to make sure that both the administration and MPLT are satisfied.

# Radewagen's response regarding Taiwan and Pacific Island nations

**WASHINGTON, D.C.—** Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-A. Samoa), who serves in the House Foreign Affairs Committee, including as vice chairman of the Subcommittee on the Indo-Pacific, as well as a co-chairman of the Pacific Islands Caucus, released the following statement:

Radewagen

"The peoples of the Pacific Islands value and support the right to self-determination and democratic elections, for themselves and their neighbors. I have a lifetime of ties and experience within the Pacific islands, and I'm confident that by far most leadership throughout the Pacific Islands fully supports a strong U.S. commitment in the region, and appreciates Taiwan's role in our many economic and security partnerships that provide enduring regional stability, peace and prosperity. The Pacific Islands have a widespread desire to stand with the U.S. and our key allies, which includes our friendship to the people of Taiwan. I am certain that the decision by Nauru did not take our professional diplomats by surprise, and will be an exception in the Pacific Islands. Congratulations again to Taiwan president-elect Lai and vice president-elect Hsiao." ***(PR)***

## COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
### OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## INVITATION FOR BIDS
## CUC-IFB-24-004

### COMMONWEALTH DRIVE WATERLINE INSTALLATION PHASE I PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Commonwealth Drive Waterline Installation Project in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of installation of new distribution line along Commonwealth Drive; connecting the new waterline to existing water mains; and installation of a new pressure reducing valve. The work is also inclusive of installation of new service laterals and water meters with individual pressure reducing valves, and relocation or reconnection of existing service laterals to new distribution line also with individual pressure reducing valve. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in 270 calendar days from date of award of contract.

*The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.*

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **January 23, 2024 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-24-004, Commonwealth Drive Waterline Installation Phase I Project"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 14, 2024**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of *fifteen percent (15%)* of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 26, 2024**, to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email at *manny.sablan@cucgov.org* with a copy to Mr. Aristotle Anicete, Project Engineer – via email at *aristotle.anicete@cucgov.org* and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior Administrative Technician – via email at *christie.sablan@cucgov.org*

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

## COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
## NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

### NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST A RELEASE OF FUNDS FOR TIERED PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

Date of Publication: January 17, 2024
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Caller Box 10007
Saipan, MP 96950
(670) 237-2200/2233

**These notices shall satisfy two separate but related procedural requirements for activities to be undertaken by the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.**

### REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or after February 5, 2024, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will authorize the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation to submit a request to the HUD Office of Disaster Recovery for the release of Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds under Division 1—Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-254) and Title XI of the Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2019 (P.L. 116-20) as amended, to undertake the following project:

**Tier 1 Broad Review Project/Program Title:** Homeowner Rehabilitation/Reconstruction, Homebuyer/Acquisition+Rehabilitation, and New Construction of Single-family Homes for Typhoon Yutu and Typhoon Mangkhut Disaster Recovery.

**Purpose:** This program will assist eligible homeowners whose primary residence was damaged by Super Typhoon Yutu or Typhoon Mangkhut and for first-time homeowners who have been severely by affected by the typhoons to acquire properties to construct new sustainable, habitable homes.

**Location:** Throughout the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, mainly the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

**Project/Program Description:** The rehabilitation activities will mainly include. but not be limited to, replacement/repair of windows, roofs (using concrete instead of tin), doors, and floors/tiles/drywall in the case of water damage. To assist the maximum number of households, rehabilitation work and materials will be limited to those items necessary to make a home livable, and the home will not be restored to pre-storm conditions where luxury materials may have been used. Also, all rehab activities will occur within the original footprint of the home. Tier 2 site specific reviews will be completed for those laws and authorities not addressed in the tier 1 broad review for each address under this program when addresses become known. Reconstruction may be necessary for homes that sustained severe damage. The project will also include the construction of new homes as prescribed by NMHC, where the number of rooms depends on the number of household members and other special features may be included to accommodate the needs of challenged applicants. For all project types, typhoon shutters and other HUD standards are required to ensure the sustainability and resilience of the homes during future natural disasters. like typhoons.

**Level of Environmental Review Citation:** 24 CFR Part 58.35(a)(3)(i) (rehab); 24 CFR Part 58.35(a)(4) (scattered-site reconstruction, acquisition, and new construction); and environmental assessment for reconstruction, acquisition, and new construction that does not meet 58.35(a)(4).

**Tier 2 Site-Specific Review:** All site-specific reviews will cover the following laws and authorities not addressed in the Tier 1 broad review: Airport hazards (24 CFR Part 51 Subpart D), Flood Disaster Protection Oct of 1973 and National Flood Insurance Reform Act of 1994, Coastal Zone Management Act, contamination and toxic substances (58.5(i)(2)), Endangered Species Act, floodplain management (24 CFR 55 and Executive Order 11988), National Historic Preservation Act, and environmental justice (Executive Order 12898). In addition, the site-specific reviews for new construction activities will cover the following: Explosive and flammable hazards (24 CFR Part 51 Subpart C), Farmland Protection Policy Act Of 1981, and wetlands protection (Executive Order 11990).

**Mitigation Measures/Conditions/Permits (if any):** Each unit considered for assistance will be checked for its location relative to airport hazards, FEMA-designated special flood hazard areas, and hazardous waste facilities through online mapping tools. The Division of Coastal Resources Management will be contacted regarding coastal zones, and a One-Start permit (covering coastal zones, endangered species, and historic preservation) will be obtained. The Historic Preservation Office and Division of Fish and Wildlife will be contacted as well. A site visit will be conducted for every unit, and the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality (BECQ) may be contacted to **confirm** the presence or absence of hazardous sites and unexploded ordnances near each property. For new construction activities, each site will be checked for the presence or absence of wetlands and prime/unique farmland and the proximity to aboveground storage tanks through a combination of online tools and consultation with applicable agencies. The existing house structure and construction Site will be inspected by a certified architectural and environmental engineer firm to assess the needs in meeting/adhering with federal standards and regulations for a suitable and sustainable home. All sites will be fenced in for safety purposes prior to any construction work. Approval from the Division of Environmental Quality for the construction of septic systems will be obtained as necessary.

**Estimated Project Cost:** $39,407,033 is allocated for rehabilitation and reconstruction work, and
$59,009,534 is allocated for acquisition and rehabilitation.

### FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has determined that the project will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on file at the CDBD-DR office located on the 3'd Floor of Ladera Building, Beach Road, Chalan Laulau and may be examined during the weekdays 8:00A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group, or agency may submit written comments on the ERR to Mr. Jesse Palacios, Corporate Director of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation at P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP, 96950. All comments received by February 4, 2024, will be considered by the Commonwealth of the

Northern Mariana Islands prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Comments should specify which Notice they are addressing.

### ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands certifies to HUD that Arnold I Palacios, Certifying Officer, in his capacity as Governor consents to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. HUD's approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under NEPA and related laws and authorities and allows the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation to use HUD program funds.

### OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

HUD will accept objections to its release of fund and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands' certification for a period of fifteen days following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if they are on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; (b) the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR part 58; (c) the grant recipient or other participants in the development process have committed funds, incurred costs or undertaken activities not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of a release of funds by HUD; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58. Sec. 58.76) and shall be addressed Tennile S. Parker, Director, Office of Disaster Recovery, Office of Community Planning and Development, Department of Housing and Urban Development, at disasterrecoveryJhud.gov or 451 Seventh Street SW, Room 7282, Washington, DC 20410. Potential objectors should contact HUD to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

David M. Apatang, Certifying Officer
Acting Governor, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas

# Nauru switches diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China

**TAIPEI, Taiwan** (AP)—The Pacific Island nation of Nauru said Monday that it is switching diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China, a move that reduces the dwindling number of Taiwan's diplomatic allies to 12 around the world.

A statement from the government of Nauru said it was severing ties with Taiwan and seeking a resumption of relations with China.

China claims self-governing Taiwan as its territory and has been peeling off the island's diplomatic allies, often with promises of development aid. It's a long-running competition between the two that has swung in China's favor in recent years.

AP

From left, Nauru Ambassador Jarden Kephas, Tuvalu Ambassador Limasene Teatu, Taiwan Foreign Minister Joseph Wu, American Institute in Taiwan director William Brent Christensen, Sandra Oudkirk, U.S. Senior Official for APEC and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands in the State Department's Bureau of East Asian & Pacific Affairs, and Marshall Islands Ambassador Neijon Rema Edwards shake hands together at the inaugural Pacific Islands Dialogue in Taipei, Taiwan, on Oct. 7, 2019.

"This policy change is a significant first step in moving forward with Nauru's development," the statement said.

China said it welcomes Nauru's move to break its "so-called diplomatic ties" with Taiwan.

The decision to re-establish ties with China "once again shows that the one-China principle is where global opinion trends and where the arc of history bends," a Foreign Ministry statement said.

Nauru said in its statement that it would move to the one-China principle, which holds that Taiwan is part of China and recognizes Beijing as the government of China. It differs from America's one-China policy, which recognizes Beijing as China's government but doesn't take a position on who rules Taiwan.

The announcement was a blow to Taiwan as it took pride in elections held just two days ago, a show of democracy that would not be possible in China. President-elect Lai Ching-te, who will take office in May, has been described as a separatist by China. His Democratic Progressive Party supports maintaining the status quo, in which Taiwan has its own government and is not part of China.

China says Taiwan must come under its control at some point and has staged frequent military drills around the island to demonstrate its determination.

Taiwanese Deputy Foreign Minister Tien Chung-kwang accused China of purposefully timing the news to the recent election.

"China's intention is to attack the democracy and freedom that the Taiwanese people are proud of," Tien said at a news conference.

Two retired U.S. officials praised Taiwan's democratic process in meetings Monday with President Tsai Ing-wen and other leaders. The Biden administration asked the former officials to visit "in their private capacity" since the U.S. does not have formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan.

The Nauru announcement caught Jarden Kephas, its ambassador to Taiwan, by surprise.

"There's nothing that I have to say. It was announced by my government and I was told to pack up and go," he told the AP.

Taiwan now has official ties with 11 countries and the Vatican. Seven of the nations are in Latin America and the Caribbean, three are in the Pacific Islands and one is in Africa.

Faith, Hope and
KARIDAT
Catholic Charities - Diocese of Chalan Kanoa

## Request for Proposal for Financial Audit

Karidat Social Services is soliciting competitive sealed proposals to perform a financial and compliance audit in accordance with the Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS), the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 and in accordance with the provisions of Uniform Guidance for the fiscal years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

**I. Contents of Proposal:** The following information must be included in the Audit Proposal:
- A. Title Page Containing
  1. RFP Subject
  2. Name of the Firm
  3. Local Address
  4. Telephone Number(s)
  5. Email address
  6. Name of contact person
  7. Submission date

**II. Transmittal Letter:**
- A. A brief statement of your understanding of the work to be performed and an affirmative statement to perform work within the time period stipulated.
- B. State all-inclusive fees for which the audit will be performed.

**III. Firm Profile:**
Provide a brief description of you firm's personnel education background and experience, number of staff, staff level (partner, manager, supervisor, etc.) and listing of clients serviced. The firm must make an affirmative statement that at least the partners are Certified Public Accounts (CPA's).

**IV. Proposal Evaluation Criteria:** The proposal will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria.
- A. Responsiveness of the proposal in clearly stating understanding of the work to be performed.
  1. Audit coverage
  2. Overall estimates as well as the time estimates for each major section of the work to be performed.
- B. Qualifications and experience of the firm
  1. Size and structure of the firm
  2. Ability to maintain continuity of project
  3. Experience of the firm in auditing Federal Financial Assistance programs and Non-Profit Organizations.
- C. Qualification and experience of staff to be assigned: education, position in the firm, number of years, and types of experience will be considered
  1. Qualifications of the audit team
  2. Supervision to be exercised over the firm's audit team
- D. Audit Fee

**V. Audit Administration Matters:**
- A. Karidat staff will prepare schedule as required by the Auditor.
- B. Audit Planning meetings, interim conferences and exit conference may be attended by the following officials
  1. Karidat's Board of Directors, the Executive Director, Accountants, and the Administrative Officer.
- C. Karidat will issue the Contract Award on February 9, 2024.
- D. The audit field work must be completed by May 15, 2024.
- E. The draft audit report must be completed by June 15, 2024.
- F. The Final Audit Report for each year will be transmitted on June 30th of the corresponding year.

**VI. Confidentiality of Audit Proposals:** All audit proposals will be reviewed in a confidential manner. Proposals must be labeled "CONFIDENTIAL" and transmitted to the Executive Director, Karidat Social Services, P.O. Box 501058, Saipan, MP 96950. It may also be hand delivered to Karidat's Office located at the, 5483 Dandan Road, Dandan Village, Saipan. Deadline for submission is no later than January 23, 2024 at 4:30 p.m.

# Guam police say man who fatally shot S. Korean tourist found dead

AP

In this image taken from video, In Kook Kim, Korean Consulate General in Guam, speaks during a joint news conference in Hagatna, Friday, Jan. 5, 2024.

**HAGATNA, Guam** (AP)—A man suspected of fatally shooting a South Korean tourist during a robbery last week in Guam was found dead with a self-inflicted gunshot wound, and his alleged getaway driver was in custody, police in the U.S. territory said Tuesday.

Police said the first suspect was found dead inside a parked car Tuesday night, KUAM-TV reported. Police won't release his name until his family has been notified.

A second man believed to have been the driver of the SUV allegedly used in the deadly Jan. 4 robbery was found in a game room and taken into custody, police said.

Guam heavily relies on tourism and U.S. government spending to power its economy. South Korea sends more tourists to Guam than any other country.

Shortly after the shooting, the Guam Visitors Bureau offered a $50,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible. Guam's governor vowed the U.S. territory would do everything to keep its people and visitors safe.

Detectives said a they got a break in the case six days into the investigation when a citizen gave them a tip.

Police also reviewed surveillance footage from about 20 businesses in the Tumon tourist district where the shooting took place. The victim was staying at a hotel in Tumon with his wife during a trip to celebrate his retirement.

The surveillance video allegedly captured the suspect's silver Toyota 4-Runner taking off from the area on the day of the shooting.

Investigators are looking into whether the gun found on the suspect had been used in the fatal shooting.

"We are not sure yet, but there may be information that it may be," Guam Police Chief Stephen Ignacio said during a news conference at police headquarters. "There's other scientific examinations that need to be conducted to see if there is direct correlation between the two."

The suspect was found dead in a car in the village of Yona, which is about a 30-minute drive from Tumon. He has a criminal record for illegal drug possession, and there was also an active warrant out for his arrest.

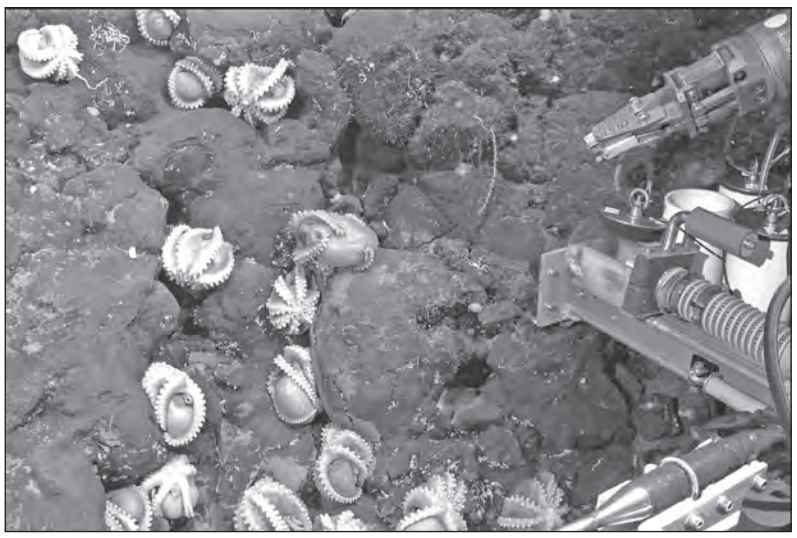
The alleged driver of the SUV was found in a Yona game room. He has an arrest record for assault and disorderly conduct.

Guam is an island of about 170,000 people approximately 3,900 miles (6,300 kilometers) west of Hawaii.

SCHMIDT OCEAN INSTITUTE

A mother octopus broods her eggs near a small outcrop of rock unofficially called El Dorado Hill. When a female octopus broods (which can be a timespan of multiple years), she does not eat and dies around the same time her eggs hatch.

# Scientists discover **4 new species** of deep-sea **octopus**



SCHMIDT OCEAN INSTITUTE

Brooding mother octopuses often curl themselves up with tentacles and suckers facing out. Researchers believe this to be a defensive position, warning predators off.

**PUNTARENAS, Costa Rica**—Scientists aboard Schmidt Ocean Institute's R/V *Falkor* have discovered at least four new deep-sea octopus species in a 100-square-mile-sized area off Costa Rica.

The international science team discovered the new species during two 2023 expeditions examining seamounts off the Pacific coast of Costa Rica. The team found two octopus nurseries affiliated with hydrothermal springs during their first expedition in June. Six months later, scientists returned to the nurseries and confirmed they appear to be active year-round. They also observed several other new octopus species away from the hydrothermal springs.

**» Unexpected octopus diversity found in Costa Rica's deep sea, along with a new deep-sea skate nursery**

Both expeditions were led by Drs. Beth Orcutt of the Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences and Jorge Cortés of the University of Costa Rica. The four species were identified and are currently being described by Dr. Janet Voight, associate curator of invertebrate zoology from the Field Museum of Natural History, and Fiorella Vasquez from the Zoological Museum at the University of Costa Rica.

One of the new octopuses is a new species of Muusoctopus and will be named Dorado Octopus after the initial location of discovery, a small outcrop of rock unofficially called El Dorado Hill. It is a related but distinct species from the Pearl Octopus found at Davidson Seamount in California in 2018, the site of another deep-sea octopus nursery. Of the four new Costa Rica species, only the Dorado octopus was observed brooding their eggs at hydrothermal springs. The discovery adds to evidence that the Muusoctopus genus has evolved to brood their eggs in warm springs on the seafloor.

"Through hard work, our team discovered new hydrothermal springs offshore Costa Rica and confirmed that they host nurseries of deep-sea octopus and unique biodiversity," said Orcutt. "It was less than a decade ago that low-temperature hydrothermal venting was confirmed on ancient volcanoes away from mid-ocean ridges

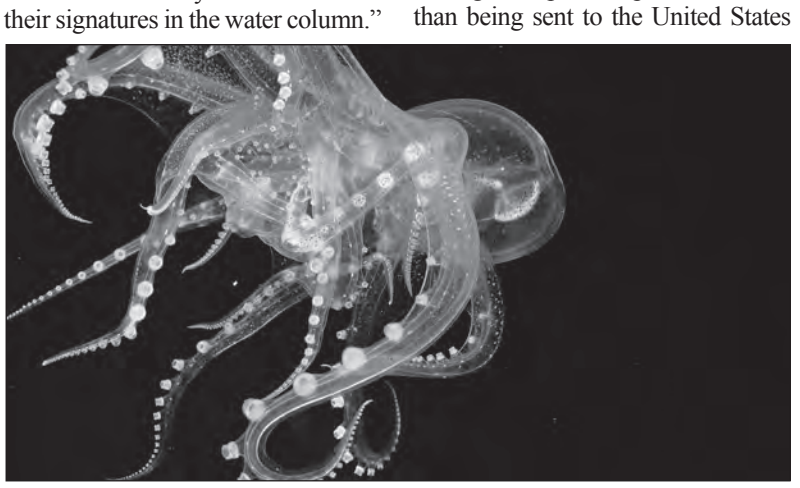
These sites are significantly difficult to find since you cannot detect their signatures in the water column."

Over 160 deep-sea animal specimens collected from the December expedition will be archived at the Museum of Zoology at the University of Costa Rica, adding to the 150 specimens collected in June. This marks one of the first times that all biological specimens will be housed within the Latin American country from which they were acquired following a deep-sea expedition, rather than being sent to the United States or Europe. Housing the collection in Costa Rica enables local scientists and students to easily access samples for research, with the potential to inform regional management strategies for the deep sea.

"The impact of the R/V *Falkor* expeditions on understanding the deep Pacific waters of Costa Rica will last into the future and hopefully create awareness that evolves into policies to protect the deep sea of the country," said Cortés, "I hope that the expedition serves as an inspiration for new generations. We need more international collaborations to advance knowledge of our deep-sea heritage."

Several other discoveries came from the expeditions. The science team found a thriving deep-sea skate nursery at the top of another seamount in Costa Rican waters, nicknaming the site Skate Park. The team also located three hydrothermal springs in the region, 10 to 30 nautical miles from each other. The springs all have different fluid temperatures and chemistries from one another, indicating unique reaction processes are facilitating their formation.

"Schmidt Ocean Institute supports the global scientific community wherever *Falkor* is operating," said Schmidt Ocean Institute's executive director, Dr. Jyotika Virmani, "Drs. Cortés and Orcutt formed a team that truly exemplifies international collaboration which empowers scientists within Costa Rica and enriches local knowledge and understanding of the ocean. In 2024, we will be operating in waters off Peru and Chile and look forward to welcoming scientists from South America on board."



SCHMIDT OCEAN INSTITUTE

This sighting of glass octopus (*Vitreledonella richardi*) was unusual—researchers are not sure if it is an act of predation or copulation, as it appears to be multiple octopuses intertwined. Glass octopus are nearly completely see-through, excellent camouflage that allows them an advantage against both predators and prey.

### About the organizations

Schmidt Ocean Institute was established in 2009 by Eric and Wendy Schmidt to catalyze the discoveries needed to understand our ocean, sustain life, and ensure the health of our planet through the pursuit of impactful scientific research and intelligent observation, technological advancement, open sharing of information, and public engagement, all at the highest levels of international excellence.

For more information, visit www.schmidtocean.org.

Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences is an independent, nonprofit research institute located in East Boothbay, Maine. From the Arctic to the Antarctic, Bigelow Laboratory scientists use innovative approaches to study the foundation of global ocean health and unlock its potential to improve the future for all life on our planet. For more information, visit https://www.bigelow.org/about/.

The University of Costa Rica is a higher education institution championing humanist teaching. On March 12, 2001, the deputies of the Legislative Assembly, taking into account the contribution of the UCR to the country, declared it a Meritorious Institution of Costa Rican Education and Culture through Law No. 8098. Since its constitution in 1940, this Institution has enjoyed University Autonomy. For more information, visit https://www.ucr.ac.cr/.

Chicago's Field Museum connects all to the natural world and the human story. The nearly 40 million specimens and artifacts in its collection are just the beginning of its quest to learn as much as it can about this incredible planet. Its more than 150 scientists and researchers travel to the far corners of the world in search of new discoveries and clues to what life was like hundreds, thousands, and millions of years ago. Every day it finds new evidence of just how interconnected the world is, and it's working to build stronger communities to help preserve the planet for all the diverse life that makes Earth home. It asks big questions, publish groundbreaking research for the scientific community, and craft exhibitions to capture the imagination of a public who shares its passion for science that is just plain fun. Science is for everyone. And Chicago's Field Museum can't wait to share it with everyone. ***(PR)***

SCHMIDT OCEAN INSTITUTE

Research Vessel *Falkor* in the Pacific Ocean during the "Octopus Odyssey (too)" expedition off Costa Rica.

SCHMIDT OCEAN INSTITUTE

Researcher Fiorella Vasquez (University of Costa Rica) processes a deep-sea octopus sample in the main laboratory during the "Octopus Odyssey (too)" expedition off Costa Rica.

# Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

## EDITORIAL

# Trump is always Trump: The fraudster ignores the rules of the court

Like the drowning scorpion slipping under the water next to the stung and dying frog, Donald Trump could not help himself to violate an explicit court order and make a political speech when Manhattan state Supreme Court Justice Arthur Engoron extended him the privilege to say a few words about his civil fraud trial after Trump's defense lawyer concluded his closing argument Thursday.

Engoron warned Trump to stick to the facts and bounds of the case, as he had insisted for days when Trump indicated that he wanted a chance to speak—an agreement that Trump never consented to. And so, after 11 weeks of trial and 44 days in the courtroom, Trump was given five minutes, and then promptly disregarded what the judge told him not to do.

"Well, I think, your honor, that this case goes outside just the facts. The financial statements were perfect, the banks got back their money and are happy as can be.

"When you say don't go outside of these things, we have a situation where I'm an innocent man, I've been persecuted by someone running for office and I think you have to go outside the bounds.

"The financial statements were perfect, there were no witnesses against us … the banks were happy as can be … I spoke to an executive at Zurich, and he said, 'You didn't defraud us' … This does go outside of the bounds …. This is a political witch hunt … we should receive damages for what we've gone through … we had millions of pages of documents. They have nothing.

"This is a fraud on me. What's happened here, sir, is a fraud on me.

"It's because I ran for office. They want to make sure I don't run again … in particular, the person in the room right now [who] hates Trump.

"We have a situation where I'm an innocent man. I've been persecuted by someone running for office… I've built buildings all over the city. I've never had a problem. Until now… they want to make sure I don't win again. This is election interference.

"They don't want me here. Let's get rid of Trump. I've done a lot of great things."

When Engoron held up a finger to show that Trump had one minute to finish, Trump said: "You have your own agenda. You can't listen for one minute. I understand that."

Engoron finally addressed Trump's lawyer: "Mr. Kise, please control your client."

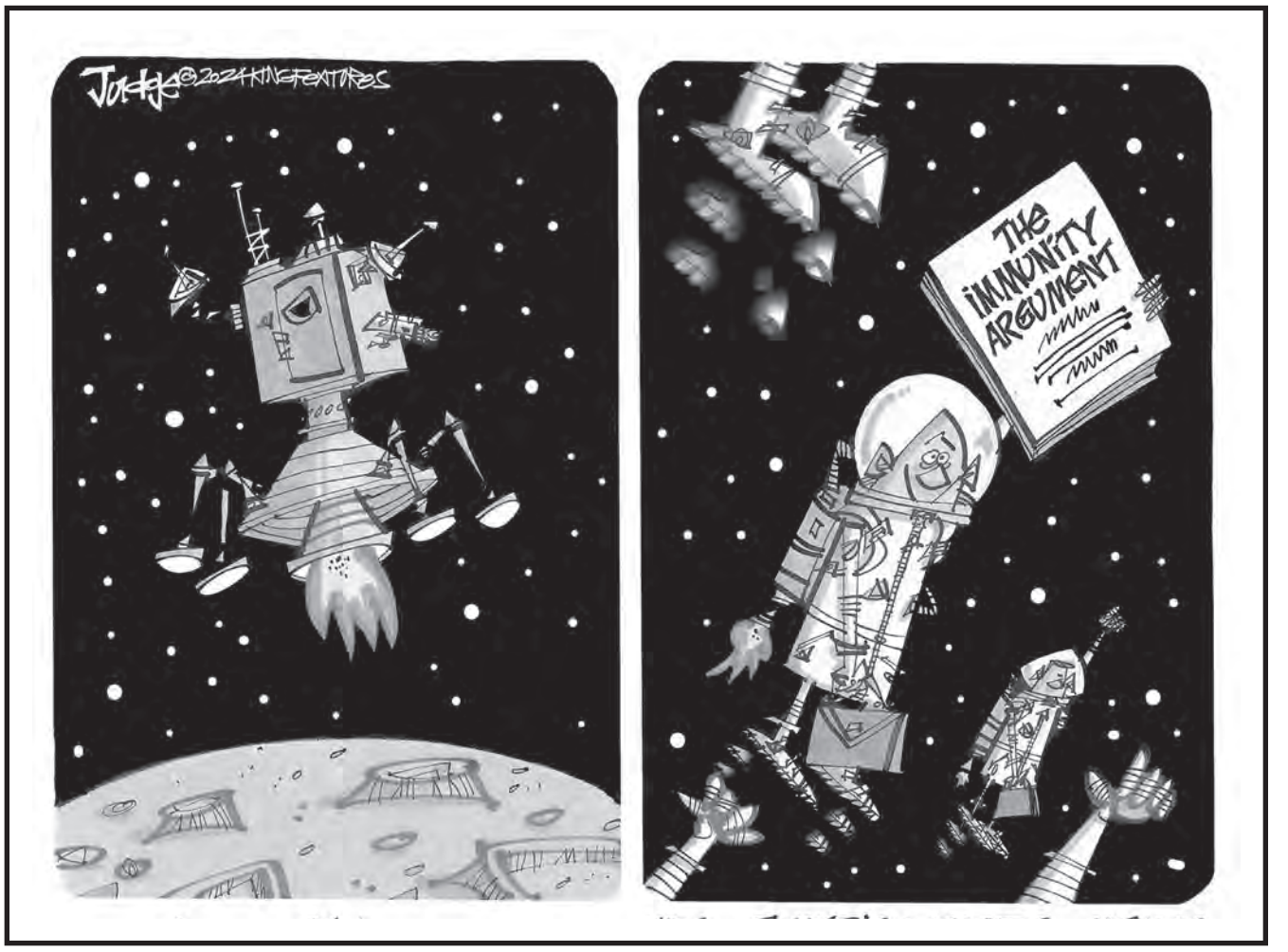
Said the former president, "You can't listen for more than one minute. This is a persecution.

"Your honor, look, I did nothing wrong. They should pay me for what we had to go through. What they've done to me reputationally and everything else."

Engoron then ended the episode: "Mr. Kise, this could have been done differently and you would have had a lot more time. Mr. Trump, thank you."

Engoron should agree to state Attorney General Tish James' request to impose a $370 million fine and permanently bar

*See TRUMP on Page 9*




# Together we must confront the rise in hate crimes and uphold our inalienable rights

**By F. WILLIS JOHNSON**
The Fulcrum

*F. Willis Johnson is a United Methodist pastor, the author of* Holding Up Your Corner: Talking About Race in Your Community (Abingdon Press, 2017) *and program director for the Bridge Alliance, which houses The Fulcrum.*

We are living in a time when anti-democratic and fascist ideologies fray our social fabric while gaining a foothold. Over the course of Dec. 15-17, 2023, a wave of bomb threats was directed at synagogues across the country, casting a shadow over the Hanukkah observance and bringing a chilling reminder of the deep-seated prejudice that continues to plague our society.

These threats are not isolated incidents but are part of an alarming pattern, an upsurge in acts of violence and hate crimes against marginalized groups like Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) communities, the LGBTQ+ population, as well as those of Jewish and Muslim faiths. The surge of these acts is a stark reminder of the ongoing struggle for acceptance and equity. They are threatening the very foundation of our democracy.

The moral imperative of our times is evident. Citizens, more than ever, must remain vigilant and actively denounce these hateful ideologies. We must become conscious and empathically engaged citizens, striving to create an equitable, just and socially responsible society. We must stand against the forces that seek to divide us and instead strive to uphold every individual's inalienable rights, including the freedom to live without fear, practice one's faith without persecution and express one's identity without retribution.

It means reaching out to our neighbors, educating ourselves and others about the diverse cultures and ideologies that make up our communities, and fostering an environment of acceptance and understanding. It requires using our voices, votes, and vows of faith to effect change and holding political and religious leaders accountable for upholding our democratic principles and respective faith tenets.

I have been fortunate to witness and participate in numerous acts of love, inclusion, mutual respect and resistance against bigotry. Most recently, amid heightened anti-Semitic tensions and vandalism in the wake of the Israeli-Hamas conflict, I and other clergy sought to stand in solidarity with our rabbinical colleagues and their community during Hanukkah. We either placed candles or paper menorahs in windows as symbols of being safe spaces for Jewish persons. This act was not a political for or against conflict in Gaza but rather an expression of acknowledgment of another's need to feel safe in our community.

Likewise, I and others continue to seek out ways to stand with our Muslim neighbors who, too, are vulnerable or victims of Islamophobia. Again, such actions provide comfort and help bridge the divide between diverse people and issues. Moreover, religious leaders have a responsibility to prevent and counter incitement of hate and violence.

Interfaith alliances have been a beacon of hope in my experience. Years ago, I had the privilege of organizing leaders from different faith traditions to foster understanding and racial reconciliation in Indianapolis through the ecumenical nonprofit Celebration of Hope. One decisive moment occurred when we organized an interfaith prayer experience in conjunction with the 25th anniversary of Habitat for Humanity. Representatives from various religious communities stood together, praying for peace, unity and economic opportunity. It was a testament to our shared humanity.

Religious leaders' responsibilities extend beyond their church. We are leaders of our respective congregations and members of the larger community. Our actions and words can influence societal attitudes and norms. They serve as a reminder of the power of love, unity and understanding in overcoming religious, racial and political indifference.

The acts of violence and hate that we are witnessing are not representative of the values of many of the world religions nor do they define us as a nation. They are the acts of a minority driven by fear and ignorance. In this time of increased hate crimes and political discord, let us recommit ourselves to the principles of empathy, justice and social responsibility. Let us stand up for the rights of our fellow citizens and denounce acts of hate and prejudice. Let us strive to be tolerant, accepting and understanding of our differences. And let us remember that our strength lies in our diversity and shared commitment to uphold the inalienable rights of every individual.

May we begin this new year, let it be with a renewed commitment to justice, equality and acceptance. Let our actions, both big and small, have the power to effect change. We are together, creating a society that truly reflects the principles of equity, justice and acceptance—a nation where everyone can live safely, freely and openly without fear. Ultimately, we are all part of the same human family and deserve the same respect, dignity and rights.

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# A short history of the CNMI economy

**By DICK CONWAY**
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

In 1999, when I first visited the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands as an economist, the CNMI had built a prosperous economy based on the apparel and visitor industries. But the garment factories were threatened by the impending entry of China into the World Trade Organization, which would give China access to U.S. markets.

My initial task was to build an input-output model of the CNMI economy designed for impact analysis and forecasting. Based on data for 1995, the estimated input-output employment multipliers derived from the input-output table were 1.50 for the apparel industry and 1.79 for the visitor industry. The apparel industry multiplier indicated that each apparel job indirectly supported 0.50 other jobs in the economy due to the multiplier or re-spending effects. Accordingly, each job in the visitor industry, which is largely composed of hotels, restaurants, and casinos, indirectly supported 0.79 jobs in the economy. In both cases, the indirect employment impact primarily involved jobs in trade, services, and government.

Between 1980 and 1995, CNMI employment soared from 5,940 to 35,880, while population climbed from 16,780 to 58,850. The annual growth rates were 12.7% and 8.7%, respectively. Some observers conjectured that at the time these rates were among the highest in the world.

During the 15-year period, the CNMI economy added 29,940 jobs. The apparel industry, which barely existed in 1980, contributed 7,710 jobs, while the visitor industry, whose employment increased from 1,000 in 1980 to 9,570 in 1995, added another 8,570 jobs. Considering their respective employment multipliers, these two industries were directly and indirectly responsible for 26,900 (=7,710*1.50+8,570*1.79) new jobs or 90% of the jobs created in the CNMI economy between 1980 and 1995.

In 1995, of the 35,880 jobs in the CNMI economy, the apparel and visitor industries directly and indirectly supported 28,690 (=7,710*1.50+9,570*1.79). The apparel industry accounted for 11,560 jobs and the visitor industry accounted for 17,130 jobs. Altogether this meant that four out of every five jobs in the economy depended upon the fate of these two industries.

Five factors led to the rapid expansion of the CNMI economy between 1980 and 1995:

- Duty-free access to U.S. markets for CNMI-made products, which was granted as part of the Covenant that governs the political relationship between the Northern Mariana Islands and the United States;
- The CNMI's attractiveness as a tourist destination;
- The availability of inexpensive foreign labor for the CNMI's apparel and visitor industries;
- Federal financial aid to expand the CNMI's infrastructure; and
- The CNMI's openness to outside investment.

When I returned to the CNMI in 2008, the apparel industry, though still in business, was clearly on its way out. It was doomed when China entered the World Trade Organization in 2001 and gained access to U.S. markets in 2005. After reaching a peak of 16,800 in 2004, apparel employment plunged to 5,300 in 2007. Despite a lift from the visitor industry during this period, total CNMI employment fell from 51,100 to 36,500, a decline of 28.6%, according to U.S. Government Accounting Office estimates.

In 2007 and 2008, the federal government revoked the CNMI's authority over its minimum wage and immigration—two measures that had given the territory's economy a competitive advantage. Consequently, the economy, which had already succumbed to a recession, appeared to be headed for a prolonged depression. In what was called the Federalization Scenario, I predicted that between 2003, the high point of the economy, and 2015, the loss of the apparel industry in conjunction with the constraints of the federalization policy, would reduce gross domestic product by $667 million in 2000 dollars (43.9%) and employment by 22,280 jobs (57.8%). The latest data show that the actual 12-year declines were 43.6 %and 48.7%, respectively.

The collapse of the apparel industry was largely responsible for a protracted depression that lasted eight years from 2003 to 2011. Making matters worse was the lack of support from tourism, as the number of visitors to the islands declined 25.5% during that period. Overall, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reported that CNMI Gross Domestic Product measured in 2012 dollars plunged from $1,509 million in 2003 to $730 million in 2011, a 51.6% decline, while CNMI employment, including jobs in the apparel industry, fell from 49,700 to 25,200, a 49.3% fall-off.

**CNMI Economy**

| | | | | | Percent Change | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2003 | 2011 | 2017 | 2020 | 2003-11 | 2011-17 | 2017-20 |
| Gross Domestic Product (mils. $2012)[1] | 1,509 | 730 | 1,313 | 661 | -51.6 | 79.9 | -49.7 |
| Population[2] | 70,500 | 52,200 | 50,700 | 47,300 | -26.0 | -2.9 | -6.7 |
| Employment[3] | 49,700 | 25,200 | 29,400 | 23,800 | -49.3 | 16.7 | -19.0 |
| Non-U.S. Citizen employment | 36,100 | 14,600 | 15,300 | 9,700 | -59.6 | 4.8 | -36.6 |
| Apparel industry employment | 15,500 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -100.0 | 0 | 0 |
| Visitor arrivals[4] | 459,500 | 342,100 | 653,200 | 88,900 | -25.5 | 90.9 | -86.4 |

[1]U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis
[2]U.S. Census Bureau
[3]U.S. Government Accounting Office
[4]CNMI Department of Commerce

Other economic indicators reflected the severity of the eight-year downturn: population (-26.0%); employee compensation (-40.6%); business gross revenue (-28.7%); taxes and general revenue (-35.4%); auto sales (-57.0%); and residential building permits (-66.9%).

Thus, in less than a decade, the CNMI lost one-half of its economy. Once the most robust economy in the world, it was now arguably the weakest.

It is ironic that China, which torpedoed the CNMI economy after entering the World Trade Organization in 2001, attempted to throw a lifeline. Considering that real GDP fell by one-half during the downturn, the recovery got off to a slow start: 0.8% real GDP growth in 2012,

2.7% in 2013, 3.5% in 2014, and 3.8% in 2015, according to BEA. The turnaround was spurred by a rebound in tourism, as visitor arrivals rose 39.9% over the four-year period.

In 2016, however, real GDP in the CNMI climbed 29.2%. By comparison, U.S. real GDP increased only 1.5% in that year. As reported by BEA, "the export of services was the largest contributor to economic growth in 2016, reflecting significant growth in visitor spending, particularly on casino gambling. ...Private fixed investment increased 60% in 2016, reflecting construction of the casino resort in Garapan and other hotel construction on Saipan."

The luxury casino resort was being developed by Hong Kong-based Imperial Pacific International Holdings. Plans for the initial gaming facility called for a 329-room five-star hotel, villas, restaurants, shops, and a meeting place. While under construction, Imperial Pacific International opened Best Sunshine Live casino to customers reportedly for training purposes.

Despite the absence of the apparel industry, the near-term prospects for the visitor industry and the CNMI economy looked good in 2017. There was, however, a question about its long-term economic growth: will the territory run out of labor? The immigration law passed by Congress in 2008 stated that after a transition period all aliens in the CNMI would be subject to removal by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security as "illegal entrants and immigration violators." In 2016, there were still 15,600 non-U.S. citizens working in the CNMI, down from 36,100 in 2003 but up from 12,300 in 2014. In 2018, the federal government extended the alien worker program to 2030, at which time the remaining foreign workers would be sent home. Between 2018 and 2020, the number of aliens in the CNMI workforce declined from 14,100 to 9,700, according to the U.S. Government Accounting Office.

But concerns about a shortage of labor in the CNMI became a moot point when the unthinkable happened: a one-two punch by Super Typhoon Yutu and the COVID-19 pandemic. On Oct. 25, 2018, packing 170 miles-per-hour winds, the typhoon slammed into Saipan and Tinian, causing catastrophic damage to homes and infrastructure. A little more than a year later, in the early months of 2000, not only did the CNMI register its first cases of COVID-19, but the worldwide pandemic began to shut down the visitor industry. After falling from 607,600 in 2018 to 487,000 in 2019 because of Super Typhoon Yutu, visitor arrivals plunged to 88,900 in 2020 and 12,700 in 2021 due to the pandemic.

It is not possible to fully assess the damage caused by these two disasters to the CNMI economy due to the lack of employment and real GDP estimates beyond 2020. But visitor arrivals provide a clue. After bottoming out at 12,700 in 2021, visitor arrivals bounced back to 95,600 in 2022 and, based on early counts, may hit 200,000 in 2023. However, despite the two-year rebound, the visitor industry is likely still operating at about one-third of its historical peak achieved in 2017, when the CNMI welcomed 653,200 visitors.

With the loss of the garment factories and the recent damage to the visitor industry, what can the CNMI do to shore up its economy, particularly for the long run? One logical avenue is diversification. But what good or service—manufactured product, financial service, software—could the CNMI produce competitively for export? One candidate is agricultural products. But, with just 253 farms, 1,515 acres of cultivated land, and $1.6 million in sales, farming currently plays an insignificant role in the CNMI economy, according to the 2018 Census of Agriculture. The potential for growth of agriculture lies in the fact that during World War II the territory had 40,000 acres of land growing a variety of crops. Nevertheless, without access to foreign labor or a massive movement of people from the cities to the countryside, agriculture is unlikely to help the economy turn around.

Under the current circumstances, the only option for getting the CNMI economy back on track is restoring the visitor industry. It is important to recognize that while typhoons come and go with regularity, pandemics are rare, occurring about once every 50 years. Thus, the immediate concern should be making the visitor industry infrastructure typhoon-proof.

However, related to the visitor industry, there are two other issues that should be addressed. First, in the construction and operation of the hotels, restaurants, and casinos for tourists, the CNMI government needs to play an oversight role to avoid the problems that have plagued Imperial Palace.

Second, the CNMI should request that the federal government loosen its restrictions on the use of foreign labor. Ultimately, the number of alien workers should not be capped at zero but around 15,000, about the size of the foreign workforce just prior to Super Typhoon Yutu. Fifteen thousand is also the number of non-U.S. workers employed in 2017 when the CNMI hosted an all-time high of 653,200 visitors. Given the recent devastation to the CNMI economy, which has been made worse by the 2008 federal immigration law, as well as the federal government's inability to stop millions of illegal migrants from crossing the country's southern border into the United States, the CNMI has a good case for petitioning Congress to cap the number of CNMI foreign workers at 15,000.

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- Dick Conway, The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Economy: Some Observations, September 2018.


*Seattle economist Dr. Dick Conway participated in three studies of the CNMI economy between 1999 and 2018. He was one of five individuals and partners who joined the NMI Economic Study in constructing a forecasting model for the Commonwealth back in 1999, lending his expertise on projection and simulation models.*

## TRUMP

*From page 8*

Trump from doing business in New York.

Our one complaint about Engoron's conduct of the trial is that he should have allowed in TV cameras for the trial's opening and closing arguments, which is permissible under state law. Then the world could have seen Trump's final outburst.

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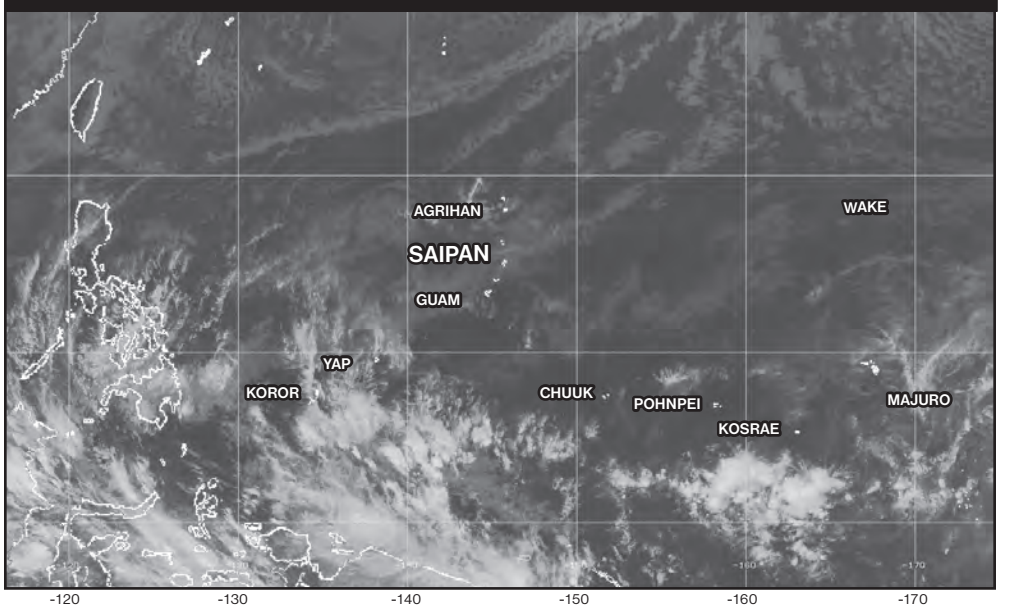
# The Weather

## 5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

| TODAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Damaging winds possible. Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 20 to 25 mph wednesday morning, increasing to 30 to 40 mph with gusts to 50 mph in the afternoon. | Windy Thursday night, becoming breezy starting Friday. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. |
| 85 / 76º | 85 / 76º | 85 / 76º | 85 / 76º | 85 / 76º |

## YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE




**PICTURE TIME: 7:49 AM TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2024**

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A fragmented shear line continues to bring scattered light showers across the region. The buoys and altimetry passes indicate seas are about 7 to 9 feet.

*Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/*

| MICRONESIA | | ▲ ▼ °F |
|---|---|---|
| Guam and Rota | Partly Cloudy | 84° / 76° |
| Palau | Thunderstorms | 84° / 77° |
| Yap | Partly Cloudy | 85° / 79° |
| Chuuk | Partly Cloudy | 85° / 80° |
| Pohnpei | Partly Cloudy | 85° / 79° |
| Kosrae | Thunderstorms | 84° / 79° |
| Majuro | Thunderstorms | 83° / 80° |

| AROUND THE GLOBE | | ▲ ▼ °F |
|---|---|---|
| Auckland | Sunny | 76° / 62° |
| Beijing | Sunny | 39° / 14° |
| Hong Kong | Sunny | 67° / 58° |
| Honolulu | Mostly Sunny | 82° / 70° |
| London | Mostly Cloudy | 38° / 33° |
| Los Angeles | Sunny | 86° / 56° |
| Manila | Mostly Cloudy | 86° / 75° |
| Melbourne | Thunderstorms | 66° / 55° |
| Miami | Showers | 73° / 62° |
| New York | Mostly Cloudy | 48° / 44° |
| Osaka | Mostly Sunny | 58° / 42° |
| Paris | Partly Cloudy | 38° / 29° |
| Busan | Partly Cloudy | 60° / 35° |
| Rome | Partly Cloudy | 55° / 32° |
| Salem | Partly Cloudy | 53° / 32° |
| San Francisco | Fog | 60° / 47° |
| Seoul | Cloudy | 45° / 16° |
| Tokyo | Cloudy | 48° / 39° |
| Washington, DC | Partly Cloudy | 52° / 36° |

| DAY | SUNRISE | SUNSET |
|---|---|---|
| Today | 6:46 AM | 6:06 PM |
| Thursday | 6:46 AM | 6:07 PM |
| Friday | 6:46 AM | 6:08 PM |
| Saturday | 6:47 AM | 6:08 PM |
| Sunday | 6:47 AM | 6:09 PM |

| DAY | MOONRISE | MOONSET | MOONRISE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Today | 11:14 AM | 11:50 PM | - |
| Thursday | 11:54 AM | - | - |
| Friday | - | 12:46 AM | 12:36 PM |
| Saturday | - | 1:42 AM | 1:21 PM |
| Sunday | - | 2:40 AM | 2:08 PM |

| TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY | | FEET |
|---|---|---|
| 5:54 AM | Low Tide | 0.06 |
| 12:32 PM | High Tide | 1.82 |
| 7:17 PM | Low Tide | 0.45 |
| - | - | - |

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## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2024

### DEPARTURES

**SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA076 | 9:50AM | 10:35AM | Daily |

**SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA824 | 7:05AM | 9:45AM | 1, 3, 5 |

**GUAM-MANILA (MNL)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| PR 111 | 5:55AM | 7:55AM | Daily |
| UA193 | 7:50PM | 11:50PM | 2, 5 via Palau |
| UA183 | 7:55PM | 9:50PM | Daily |

**SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| OZ626/703 | 3:10AM | 10:30PM | 4, 7 via ICN |
| 7C3403/2305 | 4:40AM | 10:20PM | Daily |
| UA076/183 | 9:50AM | 9:50PM | Daily via Guam |
| UA076/193 | 9:50AM | 11:50PM | 2, 5 via Guam, Palau |

**SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| TW308 | 2:15AM | 6:10AM | Daily |
| OZ626 | 3:10AM | 6:55AM | 4,7 |
| 7C3403 | 4:40AM | 8:35AM | Daily |
| 7C3405 | 4:35PM | 8:25PM | Daily |

### ARRIVALS

**GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA174 | 8:00AM | 8:45AM | Daily |

**NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA825 | 9:25PM | 2:00AM+1 | 2, 4, 7 |

**MANILA (MNL)-GUAM**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA189 | 00:40AM | 6:30AM | 3, 6 |
| PR110 | 10:05PM | 3:55AM+1 | Daily |
| UA192 | 10:40PM | 6:30AM+1 | 2, 5 via Palau |
| UA184 | 10:55PM | 4:45AM+1 | 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 |

**MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA189/174 | 00:40AM | 8:45AM+1 | 3, 6 via Guam |
| OZ702/625 | 12:05PM | 1:40AM+1 | 3, 6 via ICN |
| UA192/174 | 10:40PM | 8:45AM+1 | 2, 5 via Palau, Guam |
| UA184/174 | 10:55PM | 8:45AM+1 | 1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam |
| 7C2306/3406 | 11:15PM | 3:30PM+1 | Daily |

**INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7C3406 | 10:10AM | 3:30PM | Daily |
| TW307 | 7:45PM | 1:15AM+1 | Daily |
| 7C3404 | 10:15PM | 3:35AM+1 | Daily |
| OZ625 | 8:20PM | 1:40AM+1 | 3, 6 |

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

## STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

**SAIPAN TO ROTA**

| FLIGHT # | FROM | TO | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1301 | SAIPAN | ROTA | 08:30 | 09:00 | Daily |
| 1302 | SAIPAN | ROTA | 10:30 | 11:00 | Daily |
| 1303 | SAIPAN | ROTA | 15:30 | 16:00 | Daily |

**ROTA TO SAIPAN**

| FLIGHT # | FROM | TO | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3101 | ROTA | SAIPAN | 9:30 | 10:00 | Daily |
| 3102 | ROTA | SAIPAN | 11:30 | 12:00 | Saturday & Sunday |
| 3103 | ROTA | SAIPAN | 13:30 | 14:00 | Monday To Friday |
| 3104 | ROTA | SAIPAN | 16:30 | 17:00 | Daily |

**ROTA TO GUAM**

| FLIGHT # | FROM | TO | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3401 | ROTA | GUAM | 11:30 | 12:00 | Monday To Friday |

**GUAM TO ROTA**

| FLIGHT # | FROM | TO | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4301 | GUAM | ROTA | 12:30 | 13:00 | Monday To Friday |

**SAIPAN TO TINIAN**

| FLIGHT # | FROM | TO | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1201 | SAIPAN | TINIAN | 7:30 | 7:45 | Daily |
| 1202 | SAIPAN | TINIAN | 8:00 | 8:15 | Daily |
| 1203 | SAIPAN | TINIAN | 9:00 | 9:15 | Daily |
| 1204 | SAIPAN | TINIAN | 10:00 | 10:15 | Daily |
| 1206 | SAIPAN | TINIAN | 14:00 | 14:15 | Daily |
| 1207 | SAIPAN | TINIAN | 15:00 | 15:15 | Daily |
| 1208 | SAIPAN | TINIAN | 16:00 | 16:15 | Daily |
| 1209 | SAIPAN | TINIAN | 17:00 | 17:15 | Daily |

**TINIAN TO SAIPAN**

| FLIGHT # | FROM | TO | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2101 | TINIAN | SAIPAN | 8:00 | 8:15 | Daily |
| 2102 | TINIAN | SAIPAN | 8:30 | 8:45 | Daily |
| 2103 | TINIAN | SAIPAN | 9:30 | 9:45 | Daily |
| 2104 | TINIAN | SAIPAN | 10:30 | 10:45 | Daily |
| 2106 | TINIAN | SAIPAN | 14:30 | 14:45 | Daily |
| 2107 | TINIAN | SAIPAN | 15:30 | 15:45 | Daily |
| 2108 | TINIAN | SAIPAN | 16:30 | 16:45 | Daily |
| 2109 | TINIAN | SAIPAN | 17:30 | 17:45 | Daily |

# Business

## Europe's biggest economy shrank last year as Germany struggles with multiple crises

**FRANKFURT, Germany** (AP)—Germany's economy shrank 0.3% last year as Europe's former powerhouse struggled with more expensive energy, higher interest rates, lack of skilled labor and a homegrown budget crisis.

Europe's largest economy has been mired in stagnation since the last months of 2022 amid those multiple challenges. The International Monetary Fund expected Germany to be the worst-performing major developed economy last year, a major turnaround from its place as a model for how to expand when other nations were struggling.

German's economy likely also shrank 0.3% in the fourth quarter after stagnating in the third quarter, the Federal Statistical Office said Monday in an initial rough estimate. Official figures for the last three months of 2023 are expected to be announced Jan. 30.

Meanwhile, there's an ongoing debate about why Germany has stalled. Energy intensive industries must pay higher natural gas prices after losing Russia's cheap supply following its invasion of Ukraine, and a burst of inflation deterred consumers from spending.

AP

The sun sets behind the cole-fired power plant 'Scholven' of the Uniper energy company in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, on Oct. 22, 2022.

Meanwhile, companies complain they can't fill highly skilled jobs, and a global slowdown in manufacturing has been felt in the country's large factory sector.

Higher interest rates from the European Central Bank aimed at quelling inflation have crimped construction of new apartments and offices.

The government also faced a budget crisis after Germany's constitutional court ruled that tens of billions of euros (dollars) originally meant to cushion the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic could not be repurposed for measures to help combat climate change and modernize the country. The 2023 and 2024 budgets had to be reworked.

Others point to a long-term lack of investment in infrastructure such as rail networks and high-speed internet as the government focused on balancing the budget under a 2009 constitutional amendment limiting deficit spending.

## More CEOs fear companies won't survive 10 years as AI and climate challenges grow

**LONDON** (AP)—More executives are feeling better about the global economy, but a growing number don't think their companies will survive the coming decade without a major overhaul because of pressure from climate change and technology like artificial intelligence, according to a new survey of CEOs by one of the world's largest consulting firms, PwC.

The survey of more than 4,700 CEOs worldwide was released Monday as business elites, political leaders and activists descended on the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, and it showed a mixed picture of the coming years.

Of the executives, 38% were optimistic about the strength of the economy, up from 18% last year, when the world was mired in high inflation, weak growth, rising interest rates and more.

The CEOs' expectation of economic decline has dropped to 45% from a record-high 73% last year, and fewer saw their company as highly exposed to the risk of geopolitical conflict, according to the PwC Global CEO Survey. That's despite wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, including disruptions to global trade from attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels on commercial ships in the Red Sea.

Even with the improved economic outlook, the challenge isn't close to over, with the World Bank saying last week that it expects the global economy would slow for a third consecutive year in 2024.

The executives, meanwhile, felt worse about the prospects for their companies' ability to weather big changes. The survey shows 45% of the respondents were worried that their businesses wouldn't be viable in a decade without reinvention, up from 39% last year.

The CEOs say they're trying to make changes, but they are running up against regulation, a lack of skills among workers and more.

"Whether it is accelerating the rollout of generative AI or building their business to address the challenges and opportunities of the climate transition, this is a year of transformation," Bob Moritz, global chairman of PwC, formerly known as PricewaterhouseCoopers, said in a statement.

Artificial intelligence was seen as both a way to streamline business operations and a weakness. Nearly three-quarters of the executives said "it will significantly change the way their company creates, delivers and captures value in the next three years," PwC said.

More than half the CEOs said AI will make their products or services better, but 69% noted that their workers needed training to gain skills to use the developing technology. They also were concerned about how AI would increase cybersecurity risks and misinformation.

Organizers of the Davos gathering warned last week that the threat posed by AI-powered misinformation, such as the creation of synthetic content, is the world's greatest short-term threat.

Another worldwide survey released around Davos, the Edelman Trust Barometer by public relations firm Edelman, says innovation is being managed badly and is increasing polarization, especially in Western democracies, where people with right-leaning beliefs are much more likely than those on the left to resist innovation.

"Innovation is only accepted if there is a sense that we're looking at the big picture of how we take care of the people whose jobs are going to change, how scientists are going to talk to the people directly so they understand it," CEO Richard Edelman told The Associated Press on Monday. "And finally, that one way in another, AI is affordable and makes it easier for people to live."

The online survey—which again showed that business is the most trusted institution among government, media, science and nongovernmental organizations—gathered responses from more than 32,000 respondents in 28 countries from Nov. 3 to Nov. 22.

Similar to AI, the PwC survey shows that the climate transition is both an opportunity and a risk. An increasing number of CEOs—nearly a third—say climate change was expected to shift how they do things over the next three years.

More than three-quarters of the executives said they have begun or completed changes to increase energy efficiency, but only 45% noted that they have made progress on taking the climate risks into account in financial planning.

The PwC survey of 4,702 CEOs in 105 countries and territories was conducted from Oct. 2 to Nov. 10.

## Boeing to increase quality inspections on 737-Max after Alaska Airlines blow out

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Boeing told employees Monday that it plans to increase quality inspections of its 737 Max 9 aircraft, following the failure of an emergency exit door panel on an Alaska Airlines flight last week.

It is the latest in a series of troubles for Boeing, whose reputation as the premier American aircraft manufacturer has been tarnished by a series of manufacturing flaws that have led some airlines to hold off aircraft purchases or go with its European rival, Airbus.

The inspections come after Federal regulators grounded the 737 Max, and that Boeing has said that after the Alaska Airlines flight and customer complaints, it is "clear that we are not where we need to be" on quality assurance and controls.

"Our team is also taking a hard look at our quality practices in our factories and across our production system," said Stan Deal, the president and CEO of Boeing Commercial Airplanes, in an email to employees.

Boeing is also bringing in airline customers and independent inspectors to go over the aircraft as needed, Deal wrote.

One of two door plugs on an Alaska Max 9 blew out shortly after the plane took off from Portland, Oregon, a week ago, leaving a hole in the plane. The cabin lost pressure and the plane was forced to descend rapidly and return to Portland for an emergency landing. No serious injuries were reported.

Following the incident, Federal Aviation Administration announced last week that it plans an investigation into whether the manufacturer failed to make sure a fuselage panel that blew off was safe and manufactured to meet the design that regulators approved.

The National Transportation Safety Board is focusing its investigation on plugs used to fill spots for extra doors when those exits are not required for safety reasons on Boeing 737 Max 9 jetliners.

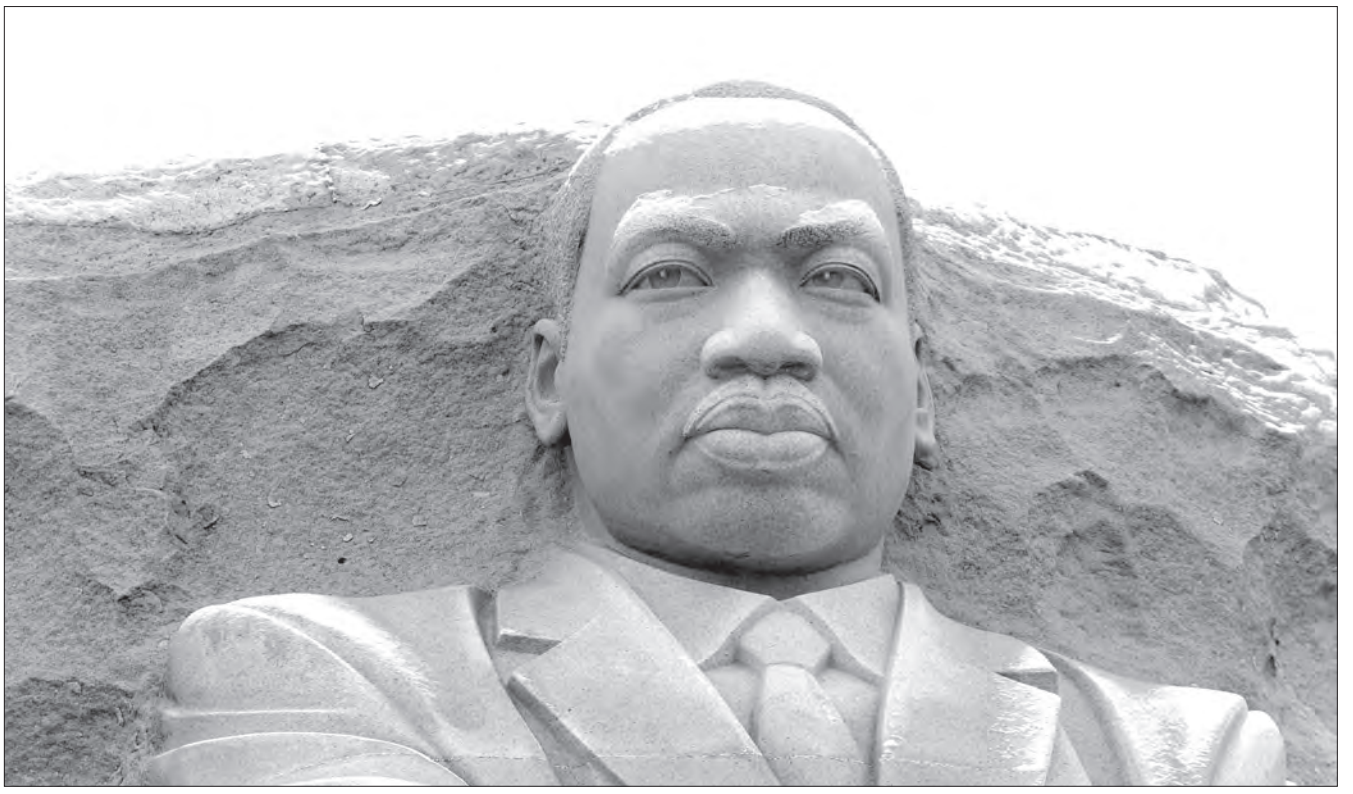
The incident on the Alaska plane is the latest in a string of mishaps for Boeing that began in 2018, with the first of two crashes of Max 8 planes in Indonesia and Ethiopia—and more than four months apart—that killed a total of 346 people.

Max 8 and Max 9 planes were grounded worldwide for nearly two years after the second crash. Since then, various manufacturing flaws have at times held up deliveries of Max jets and a larger Boeing plane, the 787. Last month, the company asked airlines to inspect their Max jets for a loose bolt in the rudder-control system.

# Nation

# MLK Jr. holiday celebrations include acts of service, parades

## » But some take a political turn



AP

The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial is seen during the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Wreath Laying Ceremony in Washington, Monday, Jan. 15, 2024.

**ATLANTA** (AP)—Communities across the nation celebrated the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday on Monday with acts of service, prayer services and parades. But with the November presidential election as a backdrop, some events took on an overtly political turn.

In King's hometown of Atlanta, several speakers at the 56th annual commemorative service at the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church, where King served as pastor, touched on the divisive partisan climate in the United States.

Former U.S. Rep. Liz Cheney, who served on the House committee that investigated the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the Capitol, had harsh words for Trump, whom she did not mention by name. On that day, Trump's supporters tried to block Congress from counting the Electoral College votes that would affirm Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 presidential race.

"A former president refuses to acknowledge that he lost, and he has convinced millions that our elections and our democracy no longer work," she said. "He threatens the foundations of our nation and everything Dr. King persevered to save."

She also criticized some religious leaders in the way they seemed to worship Trump, not God.

U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock, the longtime senior pastor of Ebenezer, told the audience, "You better stand up and vote!" to rousing applause. "If your vote didn't count, why are folks trying so hard to keep you from voting? Stand and use your voice. Stand up and use your vote. Speak up!"

Bernice King, the daughter of the late civil rights leader, warned that "our humanity is literally under attack." But she noted that her father's legacy of nonviolence taught the world that "we can defeat injustice, ignorance and hold people accountable at the same time without seeking to destroy, diminish, demean or cancel them."

Speaking at the MLK Day at the Dome rally at the South Carolina Statehouse, Vice President Kamala Harris said young people two or three generations removed from King have seen their freedoms shrink—from laws restricting voting to bans on abortions and the ever-present threat of gun violence, especially in schools.

"They even try to erase, overlook and rewrite the ugly parts of our past. For example, the Civil War—which must I really have to say was about slavery?" Harris said.

Harris also used her speech at the event—which started in 2000 to pressure the state to remove the Confederate flag from atop the Capitol dome—to urge the younger generation to regain those rights lost through voting and action.

"Generation after generation on the fields of Gettysburg, in the schools of Little Rock, on the grounds of this Statehouse, on the streets of Ferguson and on the floor of the Tennessee House of Representatives—we the people have always fought to make the promise of freedom real," Harris said.

In Philadelphia, President Joe Biden marked Martin Luther King Jr. Day by volunteering at Philabundance, a nonprofit food bank. He stuffed donation boxes with apples and struck up casual chatter with workers at the organization, where he volunteered for the third time as president or president-elect to mark the January day of service.

The 29th annual Greater Philadelphia Martin Luther King Day of Service is billed as the first and largest King day of service in the nation. Volunteer activities included preparing care packages for victims of gun violence and distributing voter information packets.

## Arctic freeze continues to blast huge swaths of the US with sub-zero temperatures

**BUFFALO, N.Y.** (AP)—Brutally cold temperatures and dangerous wind chills stayed put across much of the U.S. Monday, promising the coldest temperatures ever for Iowa's presidential nominating contest, holding up travelers, and testing the mettle of NFL fans in Buffalo for a playoff game that was delayed a day by wind-whipped snow.

About 150 million Americans were under a windchill warning or advisory for dangerous cold and wind, said Zack Taylor, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in College Park, Maryland, as an Arctic air mass spilled south and eastward across the U.S.

Sunday morning saw temperatures as low as minus 20 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 6.7 degrees Celsius) to minus 40 F (minus 40 C) in northern and northeast Montana. Saco, Montana, dropped to minus 51 F (minus 26 C). Subzero lows reached as far south as Kansas, Missouri, Illinois and parts of Indiana, Taylor said.

About 110,000 U.S. homes and businesses were without power late Monday, the bulk of them in Oregon after widespread outages that started Saturday. Portland General Electric warned that strong winds forecast for Monday and threat of an ice storm Tuesday could delay restoration efforts.

Classes were cancelled Tuesday for students in major cities including Chicago—the nation's fourth-largest public school district—Denver, Dallas, Fort Worth and Portland.

The storm was blamed for at least four weekend deaths around Portland, including two people who died of suspected hypothermia. Another man was killed after a tree fell on his house and a woman died in a fire that spread from an open-flame stove after a tree fell onto an RV.

Three deaths of homeless people were under investigation in the Milwaukee area. They likely died from hypothermia, officials said. A 64-year-old man was found dead under a bridge Friday, a 69-year-man was pronounced dead after being found in a vehicle on Saturday and on Monday a 40-year-old man was found dead near railroad tracks, the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office said.

In Utah, where almost four feet (1.2 meters) of snow fell in the mountains over a 24-hour period, a snowmobiler was struck and killed Sunday night by a semitrailer about 70 miles (113 kilometers) southeast of Salt Lake City, according to the Utah Highway Patrol. The victim was attempting to cross U.S. Highway 40.

In Wyoming, a backcountry skier was killed after triggering a 50-feet (15-meter) wide avalanche. The victim was swept into a gully and through brush and trees, then remained buried for about fifteen minutes before being found by a companion in the mountains south of Alpine, Wyoming, on Sunday afternoon, according to the Bridger-Teton Avalanche Center.

It marked the third U.S. avalanche fatality in recent days, following a Wednesday accident at a California ski resort that killed one person and injured three others, and another that killed a person on Thursday in the Idaho backcountry near the Montana border.

Swirling snow and avalanche dangers prompted numerous road closures across the Rocky Mountains. East of the resort community of Vail, Colorado, officials closed a 20-mile (32-kilometer) stretch of Interstate 70, the primary east-west highway through the state.

Crews on Monday continued clearing snow after a weekend avalanche briefly trapped the occupants of 10 cars and shut down the road over Berthoud Pass in central Colorado. Kaitlyn Punzalan was in a car with her husband and some friends heading home to Denver when they were caught in the slide.

"My friend was driving my car and all of a sudden he goes—'Ah, avalanche!' And we just look up and see all of this snow coming down towards us," Punzalan told KUSA-TV. She said it took them about an hour to dig out, with help from others who were on the road. No injuries were reported.

The Buffalo Bills renewed their call for shovelers at Highmark Stadium in Orchard Park, New York, on Monday morning to dig out from more than a foot and a half of snow that fell through a blustery weekend.

## Fueled by unprecedented border crossings, record 3M cases clog US immigration courts

**MIAMI** (AP)—Eight months after crossing the Rio Grande into the United States, a couple in their 20s sat in an immigration court in Miami with their three young children. Through an interpreter, they asked a judge to give them more time to find an attorney to file for asylum and not be deported back to Honduras, where gangs threatened them.

Judge Christina Martyak agreed to a three-month extension, referred Aarón Rodriguéz and Cindy Baneza to free legal aid provided by the Catholic Archdiocese of Miami in the same courthouse — and their case remains one of the unprecedented 3 million currently pending in immigration courts around the United States.

Fueled by record-breaking increases in migrants who seek asylum after being apprehended for crossing the border illegally, the court backlog has grown by more than 1 million over the last fiscal year and it's now triple what it was in 2019, according to government data compiled by Syracuse University's Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse.

Judges, attorneys and migrant advocates worry that's rendering an already strained system unworkable, as it often takes several years to grant asylum-seekers a new stable life and to deport those with no right to remain in the country.

"Sometimes hope already sinks," said Mayra Cruz after her case was also granted an extension by Martyak because the Peruvian migrant doesn't have an attorney.

"But here I've felt a bit safer," added Cruz, who said she had to flee with only the clothes on her back with her partner and their children after repeated threats from gangs.

About 261,000 cases of migrants placed in removal proceedings are pending in the Miami court—the largest docket in the country. That's about the same as were pending nationwide a dozen years ago, said Syracuse University professor Austin Kocher.

The backlog includes migrants who have been in the United States for decades and were apprehended on unrelated charges, but most are new asylum seekers who declare a fear of persecution if they are sent back, he added.

Backlogged courts, administered by the Justice Department, often get little attention in immigration debates, including in current Senate negotiations over the Biden administration's $110 billion proposal that links aid for Ukraine and Israel to asylum and other border policy changes.

# Asia

## N. Korea to no longer pursue reconciliation with S. Korea

AP

In this photo provided by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un speaks at the Supreme People's Assembly in Pyongyang, North Korea Monday, Jan. 15, 2024.

**SEOUL, South Korea** (AP)—North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said his country would no longer pursue reconciliation with South Korea and called for rewriting the North's constitution to eliminate the idea of shared statehood between the war-divided countries, state media said Tuesday.

The historic step to discard a decades-long pursuit of unification, which was based on a sense of national homogeneity shared by both Koreas, comes amid heightened tensions where the pace of both Kim's weapons development and the South's military exercises with the United States have intensified in a tit-for-tat.

North Korea also abolished the key government agencies that had been tasked with managing relations with South Korea in a decision made during a meeting of the country's rubber-stamp parliament on Monday, the North's official Korean Central News Agency said.

The Supreme People's Assembly said the two Koreas are locked in an "acute confrontation" and that it would be a serious mistake for the North to regard the South as a partner in diplomacy.

"The Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Country, the National Economic Cooperation Bureau and the (Diamond Mountain) International Tourism Administration, tools which existed for (North-South) dialogue, negotiations and cooperation, are abolished," the assembly said in a statement.

During a speech at the assembly, Kim blamed South Korea and the United States for raising tensions in the region, citing their expanded joint military exercises, deployments of U.S. strategic military assets, and their trilateral security cooperation with Japan as turning the Korean Peninsula into a dangerous war-risk zone, KCNA said.

Kim said it has become impossible for the North to pursue reconciliation and a peaceful reunification with the South, which he described as "top-class stooges" of outside powers obsessed with confrontational maneuvers.

He called for the assembly to rewrite the North's constitution to define South Korea as the North's "primary foe and invariable principal enemy."

He also ordered the removal of past symbols of inter-Korean reconciliation, to "completely eliminate such concepts as 'reunification,' 'reconciliation' and 'fellow countrymen' from the national history of our republic."

## ASIAN BRIEFS

### US delegation praises Taiwan's democracy after pro-independence presidential candidate wins election

**TAIPEI, Taiwan** (AP)—Retired U.S. officials met with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen on Monday and praised the island's democratic processes under which it elected a new president and legislature over the weekend in defiance of China's claim of sovereignty over Taiwan and threat to annex it by military force. "Taiwan's democracy has set a shining example for the world, a democratic success story based on transparency, the rule of law and respect for human rights and freedoms," former national security adviser Stephen Hadley said. America's commitment to Taiwan is "rock solid," he said. The visit came as the Pacific Island nation of Nauru announced it was switching diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China, reducing Taiwan's number of diplomatic allies to just 12. Taiwan's Foreign Ministry said it was withdrawing its diplomats from the tiny nation "in the name of national dignity." Taiwanese voters on Saturday elected current Vice President Lai Ching-te as the new president, a move likely to prompt China to maintain its military, diplomatic and economic threats against the island.

### PH president congratulates Taiwan's president-elect, strongly opposed by China

**MANILA, Philippines** (AP)—Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday congratulated the winner of Taiwan's presidential election, Lai Ching-te, saying in a statement shared on social media that he was looking "forward to close collaboration" and "strengthening mutual interests." Marcos's congratulatory message is likely to be frowned upon by China, which claims the self-governing island as its own territory to be taken under Beijing's control by force if necessary. President-elect Lai has vowed to safeguard the island's de-facto independence from China and further align it with other democracies. After U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken congratulated Lai on his victory, China's Foreign Ministry said that message "sends a gravely wrong signal to the 'Taiwan independence' separatist forces," claiming it goes against a U.S. commitment to maintain only unofficial ties with Taiwan. "On behalf of the Filipino people, I congratulate President-elect Lai Ching-te on his election as Taiwan's next president," Marcos said on X, formerly known as Twitter. "We look forward to close collaboration, strengthening mutual interests, fostering peace and ensuring prosperity for our peoples in the years ahead," the Philippine president added.

# World

## Iran strikes targets in northern Iraq, Syria

**IRBIL, Iraq** (AP)—Iran fired missiles late Monday at what it claimed were Israeli "spy headquarters" near the U.S. consulate in the northern Iraqi city of Irbil, and at targets linked to the extremist group Islamic State in northern Syria.

**» As regional tensions escalate**

Four civilians were killed and six injured after missiles hit an upscale area near the consulate in Irbil, the seat of Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region, according to the security council of the Kurdish regional government.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said in a statement that it had hit a headquarters of Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency, in the Kurdish region of Iraq. Another statement said it had fired a number of ballistic missiles at "terrorist operations," including Islamic State targets, in Syria and destroyed them.

The strikes come at a time of heightened tensions in the region and fears of a wider spillover of the ongoing war in Gaza.

Since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war on Oct. 7, Iranian-backed militias in Iraq have launched near-daily drone attacks on bases housing U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria, which the groups have said was in retaliation for Washington's support of Israel, and in an attempt to force U.S. troops to leave the region.

The United States strongly condemns "Iran's reckless missile strikes" in Irbil, said State Department spokesman Matthew Miller. He said the attacks "undermine Iraq's stability."

A U.S. defense official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss details that had not been made public said the U.S. tracked the missiles, which hit in northern Iraq and northern Syria, and no U.S. facilities were struck or damaged in the attacks. The official said initial indications were that the strikes were "reckless and imprecise."

An Iraqi security official said Irbil was targeted with "several" ballistic missiles but did not give further details. An official with an Iranian-backed Iraqi militia said 10 missiles fell in the area near the U.S. consulate. He said the missiles were launched by Iran's Revolutionary Guards. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity.

Peshraw Dizayi, a prominent local businessman with a portfolio that included real estate and security services companies, was killed in one of the Irbil strikes along with members of his family, according to a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, by Mashan al-Jabouri, a former Iraqi member of parliament. Al-Jabouri said that one of the missiles had fallen on Dizayi's "palace, next to my house, which is under construction on the road to the Salah al-Din resort."

Other regional political figures also confirmed Dizayi's death.

In 2022, Iran claimed responsibility for a missile barrage that struck in the same area near the sprawling U.S. consulate complex in Irbil, saying it was retaliation for an Israeli strike in Syria that killed two members of its Revolutionary Guard.

Iran's strike in northern Syria late Monday came after the Islamic State group claimed responsibility earlier this month for two suicide bombings targeting a commemoration for an Iranian general slain in a 2020 U.S. drone strike. The attack in Kerman killed at least 84 people and wounded an additional 284 at a ceremony honoring Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani.

Last month, Iran accused Israel of killing a high-ranking Iranian general, Seyed Razi Mousavi, in an airstrike on a Damascus neighborhood.

## Houthi rebels strike US-owned ship off the coast of Yemen

**JERUSALEM** (AP)—Houthi rebels fired a missile, striking a U.S.-owned ship Monday just off the coast of Yemen in the Gulf of Aden, less than a day after they launched an anti-ship cruise missile toward an American destroyer in the Red Sea.

The attack on the Gibraltar Eagle, later claimed by the Houthis, further escalates tensions gripping the Red Sea after American-led strikes on the rebels. The Houthis' attacks have roiled global shipping, amid Israel's war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip, targeting a crucial corridor linking Asian and Mideast energy and cargo shipments to the Suez Canal onward to Europe.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, which oversees Mideast waters, said Monday's attack happened some 110 miles (177 kilometers) miles southeast of Aden. It said the ship's captain reported that the "port side of vessel hit from above by a missile."

Private security firms Ambrey and Dryad Global told The Associated Press that the vessel was the Eagle Gibraltar, a Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier. The U.S. military's Central Command later acknowledged the strike.

"The ship has reported no injuries or significant damage and is continuing its journey," Central Command said.

Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree claimed the attack in a recorded television address that aired Monday night.

"The Yemeni armed forces consider all American and British ships and warships participating in the aggression against our country as hostile targets," he said.

The vessel is owned by Eagle Bulk Shipping, a Stamford, Connecticut-based firm traded on the New York Stock Exchange. In a statement to The Associated Press, the company said the strike caused "limited damage to a cargo hold but (the ship) is stable and is heading out of the area."

"All seafarers onboard the vessel are confirmed to be uninjured," the firm said. "The vessel is carrying a cargo of steel products. Eagle Bulk management is in close contact with all relevant authorities concerning this matter."

Satellite-tracking data analyzed by AP showed the Eagle Gibraltar had been bound for the Suez Canal, but rapidly turned around at the time of the attack.

Central Command said it detected a separate anti-ship ballistic missile launch toward the southern Red Sea on Monday, though it "failed in flight and impacted on land in Yemen."

The U.S. Maritime Administration, under the Transportation Department, also issued a warning of a continuing "high degree of risk to commercial vessels" traveling near Yemen.

# Good Housekeeping

## Art selection and placement

By CATHY HOBBS
Tribune News Service

Artwork or wall décor in many instances serves as the primary focal point of a space. It's the area where the eye immediately goes and rests when one enters a room. As a result, the impression must be strong and appealing.

The selection of art is so integral to the overall outcome of a space that a popular designer "hack" is to select the art for a space first and then build a color palette around it. Choosing the right piece of art is where both the magic and the confusion may come into play.

### What to buy

Often there is trepidation and fear associated with an art purchase. From not knowing the appropriate art to buy to concerns about cost, purchasing artwork can be tricky. If you are in the market for gallery quality art pieces, seeking the assistance of a trained professional is likely your best path. On the other hand, canvases or prints that are licensed and sold through retail stores can also be a great option. A good rule of thumb is to purchase not only pieces that you love, but that are versatile enough that they can be swapped in or out and placed in more than one room of your home as opposed to only being suitable for a single space.

### Where to source

Artwork can consist of a myriad of mediums. While typically painted canvases come to mind, when looking for artwork, also consider other forms of wall décor such as photography and framed mixed media. Artwork doesn't have to be expensive to look expensive; one great resource for affordable and approachable artwork is to purchase from emerging artists and art students. Also, be on the lookout for craft shows, flea markets as well as antique and secondhand stores.

PROVIDED PHOTO
Wall decor such as letters and wall stickers help to add an element of whimsy in this children's bedroom.

SCOTT GABRIEL MORRIS/PROVIDED PHOTO
A triptych provides a focal point above a dining room sideboard.

PROVIDED PHOTO
Neutral artwork helps to create a modern vibe in this dining space.

### Popular locations in the home to place artwork

- Entries
- Bathrooms
- Hallways
- Living Rooms
- Dining Rooms
- Bedrooms

### Wall décor placement

For most homeowners, where and at what height to place artwork is confusing. The typical hanging height for a piece of artwork is for it to be hung 5 feet above the finished floor. In other words, the center point of the artwork should be at eye level, with the commonly used measurement, being 5 feet.

## How can I stay fit in the new year? Try setting up a home gym

By PAUL F. P. POGUE
Ask Angi

With the holidays in the rear view mirror, you may be turning your mind to New Year's resolutions. And one of the most common resolutions is to get fit, lose weight and maybe work off those winter turkey feasts.

However, this is also one of the most commonly broken resolutions by the time spring comes around. Plus, getting fit is more than just a number on a scale; it's about assembling a healthy lifestyle on all fronts. Here are some ways to start getting fit and stay committed all year round.

### Build a Home Gym

A home gym is one of the most common fitness plans. And while you may be envisioning a large, expensive installation, that doesn't have to be the case. You can customize your fitness plan to match a space as small as a spare room or as expansive as a basketball court, depending on your tastes.

When you design your home gym, maximize your chances for success with these hints:

### Make it a welcoming and inviting space

You won't use your home gym very often if you don't actually like where it's at. Decorate it in a manner that fits your tastes, or install a sound system or wall-mounted television to provide entertainment while you exercise.

### Use it exclusively for workouts

It's not always possible to do this, but if you can, make sure your gym space is used for workouts and nothing else. If it's a multipurpose space, it becomes very easy to stuff the equipment in a corner and forget about it.

Put some distance between it and the rest of the house

One of the biggest enemies of fitness is distraction. It's very easy to get pulled away from a workout at home to deal with some kind of family or house matter. If possible, place your gym a little bit away from the main hustle and bustle of the house, or make a point to carve out time where you're less likely to be distracted while you work out.

DM STOCK PRODUCTION
A home gym is one of the most common fitness plans.

### Consider hiring a personal trainer

Personal trainers can make a big difference in your fitness plan. You don't necessarily have to have a trainer come in every week or even all that often (though that is of course quite useful). A consultation of even a few hours can give a trainer enough time to show you the best way to use your space and your tools at hand to maximize your home gym time. If possible, bring them back every so often to help you correct your technique and level up your skills.

### Useful gym equipment

You can fill your home gym with the fitness gear that most appeals to you. Here are some of the tried-and-true methods that work well:

**Stability balls**: These versatile tools can be used for a nearly infinite number of exercises and training. A personal instructor can show you the best methods for you.

**Dumbbells**: These staples of weight training don't take up much room and tend not to cost very much. They provide literally hundreds of exercise options.

**Resistance bands**: Because they're the least complicated and least expensive of fitness gear, they're deceptively simple. But they're great for stretching, strength training and working out when you have little space or fear.

**Weight bench**: This is another standby that can be used for many exercises. Make sure it has an adjustable incline to work on different muscle groups.

*Tweet your home care questions with #AskingAngi and we'll try to answer them in a future column.*

# Life & Style

## ‘Succession’ dominates drama Emmys, ‘The Bear’ claims comedy, and Quinta Brunson makes history

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—”Succession” won best drama series, “The Bear” won best comedy, and both dominated the acting awards at Monday night’s Emmys, while Quinta Brunson scored an emotional and historic win for “Abbott Elementary.”

“Succession,” the HBO saga of a squabbling wealthy family and maladjusted media empire, won its third best drama series prize for its fourth and final season, along with a best actor in a drama award for Kieran Culkin and best actress in a drama for Sarah Snook.

“The Bear,” the FX dramedy about another contentious family and a struggling restaurant at the center of the life of a talented chef, won best comedy series for its first season. The Emmys also heaped honors on its acting cast, naming Jeremy Allen White as best actor in a comedy, best supporting actress in a comedy for Ayo Edebiri and best supporting actor in a comedy for Ebon-Moss Bachrach. All three were first-time nominees.

“This is a show about family and found family and real family,” Edebiri said from the stage as she accepted the first trophy of the 75th Primetime Emmy Awards at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles.

Brunson won best actress in a comedy at the Emmy Awards for the show she created, “Abbott Elementary,” becoming the first Black woman to win the award in more than 40 years and the first from a network show to win it in more than a decade.

“I love making ‘Abbott Elementary’ so much and I am so happy to be able to live my dream and act out comedy,” Brunson said during her acceptance on the Fox telecast, fighting back tears. The writer-actor was among the stars with standout looks on the Emmys’ silver carpet.

AP

Kieran Culkin accepts the award for outstanding lead actor in a drama series for “Succession” during the 75th Primetime Emmy Awards on Monday, Jan. 15, 2024, at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles.

“Succession” won six Emmys overall including best supporting actor for Matthew Macfadyen.

“Beef” won best limited series, while Steven Yeun and Ali Wong became the first Asian Americans to win in their categories – Yeun for best actor in a limited series and Wong for best actress. Creator Lee Sung won Emmys for writing and directing. It had eight Emmys overall after three wins at last weekend’s Creative Arts Emmy Awards.

Brunson had won a writing Emmy for “Abbott Elementary,” her mockumentary about a predominantly Black and chronically underfunded grade school in Philadelphia, but this is her first for acting. Isabel Sanford of “The Jeffersons” was the only previous Black woman to win the category in 1981.

The first hour of the show held on Martin Luther King Jr. Day saw three Black women win major awards: Brunson, Edebiri and Niecy Nash-Betts, who won best supporting actress in a limited series for “Dahmer – Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story.”

On the Netflix show, Nash-Betts played a neighbor of the serial killer whose complaints to authorities about his behavior go unheeded.

“I accept this award on behalf of every Black and brown woman who has gone unheard and over-policed,” she said.

The show was held on the holiday because of a four-month delay over Hollywood’s writers and actors strikes.

“Everybody having fun at the chocolate Emmys tonight?” host Anthony Anderson said during the show. “We are killing it tonight! ... This is like MLK Day and Juneteenth all rolled up in one!”

Anderson, who was nominated for lead actor in a comedy seven times without a win for his show “black-ish,” added, “if I was nominated this year, hell, I definitely would have won!”

The tweaked awards calendar made for some oddities. Edebiri and White won their Emmy for the show’s first season eight days after after winning Golden Globes for the second season.

Backstage, a staffer working the Emmys approached White as he was scrolled through congratulatory texts on his phone while waiting to speak in the press room. “I’m a cook myself so this means a lot to me,” he told White before grabbing a selfie with the star.

Culkin outshined the older brother and the father to win the final lead actor Emmy for “Succession.”

Culkin had twice been nominated for best supporting actor for “Succession” without a win. But in the final season, in which his character Roman Roy goes from sideline wisecracker to emotional disaster at the center of the show’s drama, he was put in the lead category and won over castmates Brian Cox, who played his father, and Jeremy Strong, who played his older brother.

Culkin got big laughs during his speech when he told his wife that their two kids weren’t enough.

“I want more,” Culkin said. “You said if I won, we could talk about it.”

Snook took her first Emmy in three nominations for “Succession” and her fictional husband Macfadyen won the second Emmy of his career for playing Tom Wambsgans, the son-in-law that began the HBO series as a hanger-on and ended it as the closest thing it had to a victor on “Succession.”

Jennifer Coolidge, the only cast member among the cursed vacationers of HBO’s “The White Lotus” to return for season two, won her second Emmy for best supporting actress in a drama.

Coolidge and her character Tanya gained an even greater cult following for the second season’s Italian storyline as she did for its Hawaiian first. The role was nearly a lead this time, but all of the “White Lotus” cast members were nominated in supporting categories, including five of them in Coolidge’s category.

## Boyfriend’s head is happily in the cloud

**DEAR ABBY**: My boyfriend of two years, “Rick,” is addicted to social media—mainly the women on there. I’m not on any of his social media, and it seems like he acts like he’s single there. If he’s not at work, he is at home, but always on his phone.

Rick pays more attention to Facebook than he does to me. There are more than 2,000 women on his FB, and he follows thousands on his TikTok. He likes and “hearts” their pictures and even comments. He sees nothing wrong with it because he’s home with me and not physically in contact with them. This has been our only problem the whole time we have been together. When I express my feelings about it, he tells me I’m overreacting and that it’s “just social media.”

I told Rick I feel like he’s cheating in a way because he is devoting his attention to other females that he could be giving me. It’s like he needs constant attention, even if it’s innocent. It makes me feel like I’m not enough for him, that he’s no longer interested in me and he’s looking for the next gal to move on to.

I feel like I have to compete with these women online. His TikTok is mainly women dancing half-naked. I can be literally right next to him in bed, but he would rather look at them. Other than this addiction, Rick is an amazing man. Please help.

COMPETING IN OHIO

**DEAR COMPETING: Rick may be “amazing,” but he is also absent. He may be next to you physically, but if his attention is directed to the dancing girls on screen, you could freeze to death and he wouldn’t notice. In a way, in fact, you ARE freezing because your love life has been put on ice. Unless Rick is willing to find things he can do with you rather than feed his addiction, you really should find a partner who is available.**

■■■

**DEAR ABBY**: My husband has always been a rule-breaker. During the COVID lockdown, he refused to change his routines. He continued to do unnecessary errands daily and eat lunch out (even if it meant in his car). My pleas for him to stop fell on deaf ears. I protected myself by keeping my distance.

Although neither of us got the virus, I’m having trouble excusing his selfish behavior. He has offered no apologies and seems to think he did nothing wrong because neither of us got sick. I maintain that is not the point. He put both of us AT RISK. How can I get past this?

DODGED IT IN THE MIDWEST

**DEAR DODGED IT: You and your husband have been lucky. A way to get past this would be to ask your husband in a non-confrontational manner WHY he did what he did, and whether he took into consideration that it might have put you in danger. Then let him explain.**

**If his response is not satisfactory enough for you to “get past this,” recognize that this is what you signed on for when you married a “bad boy” (aka a rule-breaker) and make sure to take ALL the necessary precautions to protect yourself in the future.**

■■■

*To receive a collection of Abby’s most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)*

### DEAR ABBY

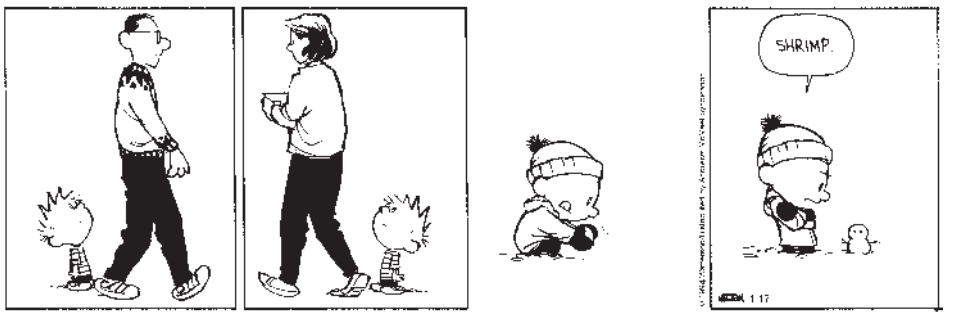
**By Abigail Van Buren**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

*Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*

# Pastimes

## Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

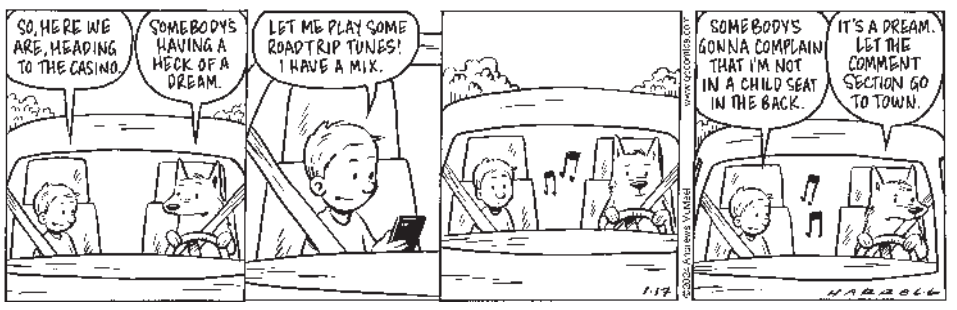



## Garfield®

By Jim Davis

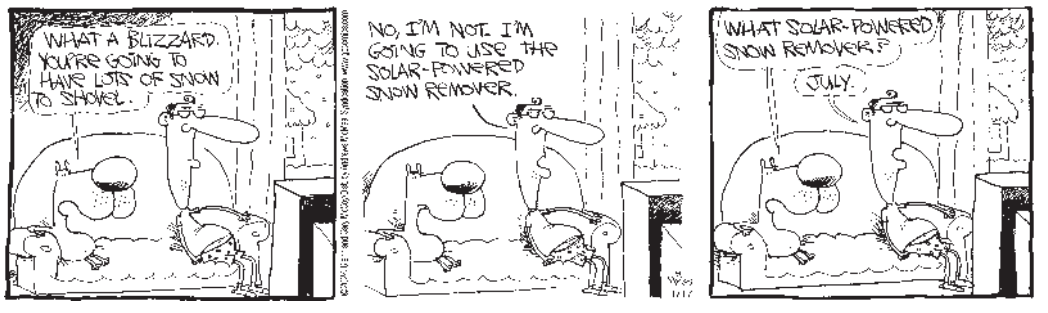
## Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


SO, HERE WE ARE, HEADING TO THE CASINO.
SOMEBODY'S HAVING A HECK OF A DREAM.
LET ME PLAY SOME ROADTRIP TUNES! I HAVE A MIX.
SOMEBODY'S GONNA COMPLAIN THAT I'M NOT IN A CHILD SEAT IN THE BACK.
IT'S A DREAM. LET THE COMMENT SECTION GO TO TOWN.

## The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


WHAT A BLIZZARD. YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE LOTS OF SNOW TO SHOVEL.
NO, I'M NOT. I'M GOING TO USE THE SOLAR-POWERED SNOW REMOVER.
WHAT SOLAR-POWERED SNOW REMOVER?
JULY.

## CROSSWORD

*By Eugene Sheffer*

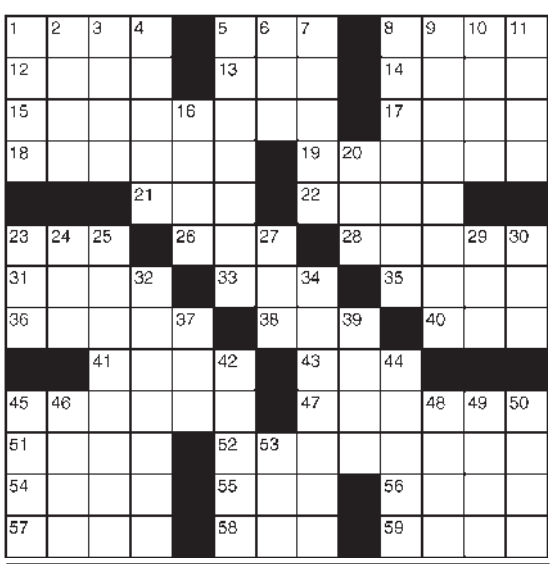
**ACROSS**
1 Audition CD
5 Xenon, for one
8 Bookkeepers (Abbr.)
12 Actor Epps
13 Choose
14 Botch up
15 Critical point
17 "You —" (Lady Gaga song)
18 Have at
19 Wild and crazy
21 Jamaican music
22 Pretzel topper
23 Joan of —
26 Doctrine
28 Grinch creator
31 Biting remark
33 — polloi
35 "Phooey!"
36 Tightfisted
38 "Kinda" suffix
40 Ambulance initials
41 Opposite of "sans"
43 Marseilles monarch
45 Tack on
47 Virgil epic
51 Serve beer
52 Opera opener
54 Ganges wrap
55 Actor Brooks
56 Activist Brockovich
57 Classic theaters
58 Architect I.M.
59 Defeat

**DOWN**
1 "Vegas" singer — Cat
2 Flightless birds
3 Supplies with staff
4 Killer whales
5 Hungarian stew
6 Earth Day mo.
7 Rose parts
8 Held lovingly
9 Flat tire cause, perhaps
10 Verdi opera
11 Use scissors
16 Polynesian carving
20 Small batteries
23 "Shark Tank" network
24 Fan's shout
25 Word with "feature" or "comfort"
27 French pronoun
29 Frodo's friend
30 Rds.
32 Munich setting
34 Gal Gadot, for one
37 Chest muscle
39 Farmer, at times
42 Munch noisily
44 Chip giant
45 Lhasa —
46 Frog's relative
48 Franc replacer
49 Rainbow
50 Cozy rooms
53 Geese formation

**Solution time: 23 mins.**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | D | G | A | ■ | B | I | N | ■ | D | O | C | S |
| A | V | O | N | ■ | C | S | C | ■ | A | R | E | A |
| D | E | B | T | R | A | C | E | ■ | I | C | O | N |
| A | N | I | ■ | R | T | E | ■ | E | R | A | S | E |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | D | O | H | ■ | P | L | Y | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| S | W | A | R | M | ■ | C | O | F | F | E | E | S |
| R | E | B | A | ■ | S | A | W | ■ | A | D | I | N |
| S | E | A | W | A | L | L | ■ | B | R | U | N | O |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | S | P | Y | ■ | Y | U | M | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| C | R | A | F | T | ■ | P | E | R | ■ | E | S | S |
| H | E | M | I | ■ | D | O | N | T | F | R | E | T |
| C | M | A | R | ■ | U | L | I | ■ | D | O | L | L |
| P | O | L | E | ■ | B | O | A | ■ | A | S | A | P |

Yesterday's answer 1-17



**STUMPED?** For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

**CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY**: Zooey Deschanel, 44; Michelle Obama, 60; Jim Carrey, 62; Steve Harvey, 67.

**Happy Birthday**: Choose intelligence over force. Look for opportunities to improve your life and future. Say no to anyone who tries to talk you into something you don't want to pursue. Life is too short to give in to those who want to make decisions for you. Focus on your needs, wants and goals, and you'll find your desired happiness. Trust your judgment. Your numbers are 7, 13, 22, 26, 31, 37, 45.

**ARIES** *(March 21-April 19)*: Look inward and adjust your lifestyle and goals to suit your needs. Refuse to waste your time arguing or let anyone bully you into something you don't want to pursue. Listen to your heart and take the path to personal gain and happiness. ✪✪✪

**TAURUS** *(April 20-May 20)*: Invest in yourself, learn and expand your awareness. Push to ensure your efforts lead to fulfillment. Use your imagination and call on experts and people you trust to broaden your perspective regarding something that can help you expand your interests and income. ✪✪✪

**GEMINI** *(May 21-June 20):* Change begins with you. Don't rely on others to finish what you start. Be secretive regarding your plans until you have everything up and running. Don't take a chance when your reputation is at stake. ✪✪✪✪

**CANCER** *(June 21-July 22)*: Refuse to let an emotional incident stand in your way. Your mission is to follow through with your plans, embrace what life offers, and use your intelligence and energy to set yourself up for success. Don't be shy; do your thing and flourish. ✪✪

**LEO** *(July 23-Aug. 22)*: Keep life simple. Take care of yourself first. Honing your skills or learning something new will encourage you to upgrade to help get ahead. Networking events will allow you to expand your interests and make new allies. ✪✪✪✪

**VIRGO** *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22)*: Sharing personal information or feelings will lead to vulnerability. Choose to make your home less of a burden and significantly more functional. Time is money, and working through chores and taking care of responsibilities will lead to more leisure time. ✪✪✪

**LIBRA** *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22)*: Be observant, avoid trouble and don't pick sides if an argument erupts. Strive for peace, walk the fence and focus on opportunities rather than trying to change others. Recognize your downfalls, and search for solutions that are quick and tidy. The less fuss, the better. ✪✪✪

**SCORPIO** *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21)*: Update everything. Details and prep work will enhance an outcome. Reach out to people you respect for taking responsibility when necessary and form a network you can count on for backup. Don't gamble with your health or money. ✪✪✪

**SAGITTARIUS** *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21)*: Consider your intentions, be honest and tidy up loose ends. Free up your time and follow your dreams. Opportunities await your discovery, and positive change is within reach. Personal growth, romance and updating your image will boost confidence. ✪✪✪✪✪

## EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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**CAPRICORN** *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19)*: A direct approach is best. Don't be shy; find out who is interested in your plans. A positive change at home will make your life easier and encourage you to go after your goals. Don't buy into someone else's plan; do your own thing. ✪✪

**AQUARIUS** *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18)*: Look at all aspects of a situation before responding. Offering something that has potential will position you for success. An opportunity to turn an idea into a profit is apparent if you reach out to people with something to contribute. ✪✪✪✪

**PISCES** *(Feb. 19-March 20)*: Refuse to let your emotions filter into a situation that requires patience and professionalism. Be direct, stick to the facts and clarify what you intend to offer. A peaceful exchange will encourage future possibilities. Pay attention to detail. ✪✪✪

**Birthday Baby**: You are decisive, effective and passionate. You are comprehensive and reliable.

## SUDOKU

**Conceptis Sudoku** *By Dave Green*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | | | | | | | | 3 |
| 2 | | | | | 4 | 7 | | 9 |
| 1 | 7 | 4 | | 9 | 8 | | | |
| | 3 | 2 | | 6 | | | | |
| 8 | | | 4 | | | 3 | | 2 |
| | | 6 | 2 | | | 1 | | 4 |
| | | 1 | 6 | 7 | | 9 | 2 | |
| | | 5 | | 4 | | | | |
| | 2 | | 8 | | 1 | | | |

Difficulty: ★★★ 1/17

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

**Yesterday's Answer**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 4 |
| 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 9 | 5 |
| 9 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 1 |
| 7 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 6 |
| 6 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 7 |
| 4 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 3 |
| 3 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 8 |
| 5 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 2 |
| 8 | 1 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 9 |

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Difficulty: ★★ 1/16

## WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

**HOW TO PLAY:** All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

**NOSE SPRAYS** **Solution: 8 letters**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | E | D | I | C | A | T | I | O | N | A | S | A | L | P |
| E | F | E | D | I | S | N | I | N | H | A | L | E | R | O |
| D | T | E | R | U | S | N | E | G | A | S | U | I | D | S |
| I | L | N | I | F | E | N | I | L | D | I | M | E | I | I |
| C | B | O | U | L | E | K | A | H | S | I | C | Z | O | T |
| I | S | S | C | O | E | E | N | E | N | O | T | E | R | I |
| N | Y | E | L | N | M | R | F | G | N | S | E | E | E | O |
| E | M | N | E | A | I | A | T | G | I | L | S | U | T | N |
| O | P | S | A | S | X | R | E | G | F | U | T | Q | S | N |
| T | T | I | R | E | O | S | R | F | L | A | E | S | P | A |
| R | O | M | N | C | T | E | I | T | S | T | A | E | R | T |
| I | M | I | A | A | L | N | S | E | P | T | U | M | A | S |
| V | S | S | N | L | S | Y | E | K | R | U | N | N | Y | I |
| I | A | T | A | R | G | E | T | S | N | I | A | M | E | R |
| N | A | S | O | N | E | X | L | A | R | O | X | I | R | D |

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Allergist, Amount, Clear, Cold, Decongestant, Dristan, Drixoral, Ensure, Flonase, Inhaler, Inside, Keys, Medication, Medicine, Midline, Nasacort, Nasal, Nasonex, Otrivin, Position, Priming, Relief, Remains, Results, Runny, Seal, Sensimist, Septum, Shake, Sinex, Sniffle, Spray, Squeeze, Steroid, Symptoms, Target, Treat, Usage

**Yesterday's Answer: Homemade**

The NEW Wonderword Grand Millennium #1 in LARGE PRINT is now available at: www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

# Allen, Bills dispatch Steelers in playoff game delayed a day by snow

**ORCHARD PARK, N.Y.** (AP)—It made no difference to Josh Allen what day or time the Buffalo Bills faced the Pittsburgh Steelers.

The AFC wild-card playoff game could've been played Sunday as scheduled, in the midst of a lake-effect storm that dumped more than 2 feet of snow on the region, and the Bills were going be to ready.

They proved that on Monday, when Allen threw three touchdown passes and scored on a franchise playoff-record 52-yard touchdown run as Buffalo beat Pittsburgh 31-17 in a game that was postponed by 27 1/2 hours.

"People keep saying that's what we wanted. We had no call in that," Allen said about the postponement. "We would have played yesterday, would have played Saturday would have played Friday, it wouldn't have mattered. We would have come out here and played when we were told to play."

The game turned into a celebration of the elements. Snow blanketed a majority of the seats inside Highmark Stadium when the gates opened and was put to good use by fans, who tossed handfuls into the air like confetti to celebrate.

AP

Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen (17) reacts after throwing a touchdown pass to tight end Dalton Kincaid (86) during the first quarter of an NFL wild-card playoff football game, Monday, Jan. 15, 2024, in Buffalo, N.Y.

"We put on a show in the snow," left tackle Dion Dawkins said. "We're here. We got one more week."

The second-seeded Bills (12-6), who closed the regular season with five straight wins, advance to host Patrick Mahomes and the No. 3 seed Kansas City Chiefs in the divisional round on Sunday night. Buffalo and its fans have longed for a home playoff game against the Chiefs after their 2020 and '21 seasons ended with playoff losses at Kansas City.

"We're a step behind already," Allen said, noting the Chiefs will have two more days of rest after beating Miami on Saturday. "It's going to take a team effort. We know the type of team that they are, obviously the type of quarterback that they have in Pat over there."

Buffalo led 21-0 before Pittsburgh scored on three straight possessions to get within 24-17. Allen then sealed the win, throwing a 17-yard touchdown pass to Khalil Shakir with 6:27 remaining. Shakir caught the pass at the 10 over the middle, slipped Minkah Fitzpatrick's tackle attempt with a spin move, and outraced the rest of the Steelers defenders into the end zone.

"Dude hit me and I was able to just stay up and make a play from there," Shakir said. "But that comes down to (Allen) getting the ball, putting it right on the money and giving me an opportunity to make a play."

Allen finished 21 of 30 for 203 yards and ran for 74 yards on eight carries, becoming the first quarterback in NFL playoff history to throw three or more TD passes while rushing for 70 or more yards and a score. He didn't have a turnover for just the fourth time this season.

Mason Rudolph threw two touchdown passes with an interception in his first playoff start for the Steelers (10-8), but Pittsburgh was too inconsistent on either side of the ball to keep up with Allen and the Bills. The Steelers lost their fifth straight playoff game; the franchise's most recent postseason victory was exactly seven years ago.

Missed tackles, two turnovers that led to 14 points for Buffalo and the Bills' ability to bottle up the Steelers' running attack contributed to the loss.

"I'm appreciative of the efforts. But it's not mystical. We didn't do what was required to win tonight," Steelers coach Mike Tomlin said. "Can't come into an environment like this with a playoff-caliber team and turn the ball over like that and expect to be competitive."

Asked about his future in Pittsburgh after completing his 17th season—all of them with a record of .500 or better—Tomlin smirked and walked away.

"When we got it down to seven points, I thought we were going to make a run. It comes back to the defense," veteran defensive tackle Cam Heyward said. "There were chances. We didn't capitalize. that was probably the biggest outlier in the game."

The elements didn't play much of a factor. Though temperatures were in the teens, the skies were clear and there was only a slight breeze blowing in off Lake Erie.

The Bills asserted themselves at the start.

Allen's 9-yard touchdown pass to Dawson Knox capped an 80-yard opening drive. After Buffalo linebacker Terrel Bernard recovered receiver George Pickens' fumble at the Pittsburgh 29, Allen threw a TD pass to Dalton Kincaid on the next play.

Allen's touchdown run came after cornerback Kaiir Elam intercepted Rudolph's pass intended for Diontae Johnson in the end zone.

The Steelers finally capitalized on one of the Bills' few errors of the half, when coach Sean McDermott elected to attempt a 49-yard field goal into the wind with a little more than two minutes left.

Montravius Adams blocked Tyler Bass' low kick. The ball squirted some 20 yards into Bills territory and was recovered by Nick Herbig at Buffalo's 33. The Steelers scored five plays later on Rudolph's 10-yard TD pass to Johnson.

The Bills overcame a rash of injuries to their defense. Bernard was ruled out after twisting his right ankle and starting nickelback Taron Johnson did not return after being evaluated for a concussion. The Bills began the game without cornerback Rasul Douglas (knee) and linebacker Tyrel Dodson (shoulder).

"We've got a resilient group," Allen said of a team that was 6-6 after an overtime loss to Philadelphia on Nov. 26. "The veteran leadership that we have, I really think it's unmatched in the league."

## BUCCANEERS 32, STEELERS 9

**TAMPA, Fla.** (AP)—Baker Mayfield threw for 337 yards and three touchdowns to lead the resurgent Tampa Bay Buccaneers to a 32-9 wild-card playoff victory over Jalen Hurts and the defending NFC champion Philadelphia Eagles on Monday night.

The Bucs (10-8) won for the sixth time in seven games to advance to a NFC divisional round matchup on the road next Sunday against the Detroit Lions (13-5), another team—like the Eagles—that stymied Mayfield during the regular season.

"We've fought so hard to get to this point, to get a chance to be in the playoffs," Mayfield said. "I'm so proud of this team tonight, the way we came out and started fast. I'm so proud. We wanted to give ourselves a chance and now we did just that.

"We can play better than we did tonight. But it's on to the next one and we're on to Detroit."

David Moore scored on a 44-yard reception in the first quarter. Rookie Trey Palmer broke the game open with a 56-yard catch-and-run for a TD that put the Bucs up 25-9 late in the third quarter. Both receivers took advantage of a porous, poor-tackling Eagles secondary to make their way to the end zone.

Mayfield, the 2018 No. 1 overall draft pick who's playing with his fourth team in less than two years, completed 22 of 36 passes without an interception. He capped his first playoff appearance since the 2020 season with a 23-yard TD pass to Chris Godwin.

Mayfield said the communication by the offense throughout the week made things feel comfortable during the game.

"Everybody was on the same page, knowing what we were going to do offensively, schematically," Mayfield said. "Came out and attacked. Obviously, got to make a few more plays overall on offense, but we made more than enough to win tonight."

It was a disappointing finish for Philadelphia (11-7), which lost to Kansas City in last year's Super Bowl and then spent spent much of this season resembling a club focused and determined to get back to the title game.

The Eagles played without leading receiver A.J. Brown, who injured a knee in the regular-season finale. Hurts started despite dislocating the middle finger on his throwing hand the previous week, and was 25 of 35 for 250 yards and one TD before being replaced by backup Marcus Mariota in the final minute.

The Bucs, who lost to the Lions 20-6 in Week 6, regrouped following a stretch in which they lost six of seven games to go 5-1 over the last six weeks of the regular season to win their third straight NFC South title and clinch a franchise-record fourth consecutive playoff berth.

The Eagles entered Monday night looking for a solution to what ailed them during a stunning about-face that saw them go 1-5 down the stretch after a 10-1 start to the season that included a dominant 14-point victory over Tampa Bay in Week 3.

Philadelphia outgained the Bucs 472 yards to 174, running 78 plays to Tampa Bay's 44 in the first meeting. With Mayfield getting off to a quick start against a porous, poor-tackling Eagles secondary, the Bucs offense gained 178 yards in the first quarter alone Monday night.

Chase McLaughlin kicked field goals of 28, 54 and 48 yards, the latter extending Tampa Bay's lead to 16-3 late in the second quarter. The Eagles cut into their deficit with Hurts using a 55-yard completion to DeVonta Smith to set up a 5-yard scoring pass to Dallas Goedert.

The score remained 16-9, though. Philadelphia coach Nick Sirianni took Jake Elliott's conversion kick off the board after the Bucs were penalized for offsides. The Eagles lined up to go for 2 points from the 1-yard line, but Tampa Bay stopped Hurts for no gain.

Smith finished with eight receptions for 148 yards for the Eagles.

Eagles security chief Dom DiSandro was back on the team's sideline after he was barred for the final five games of the regular season after a sideline altercation with 49ers linebacker Dre Greenlaw on Dec. 3. The Eagles were fined $100,000 for the incident. DiSandro was permitted to travel and perform all other work duties during the sideline ban.

Three members of the family of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. served as honorary team captains for the Buccaneers.

Martin Luther King III, Arndrea Waters King, and Yolanda Renee King attended the game as special guests and participated in the pregame coin toss. It's the first time members of the King family have participated in the commemoration of MLK Day at an NFL game.

# Draymond returns from suspension but Warriors lose to Grizzlies

**MEMPHIS, Tenn.** (AP)—Vince Williams Jr. scored 24, GG Jackson added a career-high 23 points and the Memphis Grizzlies defeated the Golden State Warriors 116-107 on Monday night in the return of Draymond Green from his league suspension.

Jaren Jackson Jr. finished with 18 points despite going 4 of 20 from the field.

For Memphis, which is short-handed due to a rash of injuries, some of them long-term, the win came as a bit of a surprise against a Warriors team that was basically at full strength. Memphis had seven players unavailable for Monday's game, but Jaren Jackson Jr. and Santi Aldama, who both missed Saturday's loss to the Clippers, did return.

"I'm happy that guys who got that opportunity, like Vince and GG, took advantage of it and played really well," Memphis center Xavier Tillman said.

Memphis coach Taylor Jenkins noted that the win was a nod to the organization's approach.

"Big win for the Grizzlies, and definitely got to shout out big with for the Hustle as well," Jenkins said referring to the Grizzlies G-League team, where several players saw action this year. "This is a product of full-on development."

Stephen Curry led the Warriors with 26 points and eight assists, and Jonathan Kuminga finished with 20 and 11 rebounds. Andrew Wiggins scored 16.

Green, suspended by the league indefinitely after he hit Phoenix Suns center Jusuf Nurkic in the face Dec. 12, played 23 minutes, scoring seven points.

But the Warriors defense let them down as well as committing 19 turnovers. Add to that Memphis going 32 of 40 from the free throw line compared with 9 of 10 for Golden State—the largest difference in an NBA game this season—and the Memphis advantage was clear. Memphis was 20 of 54 from outside the arc.

"We played very poorly defensively, but a lot of that had to do with our offense," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "Nineteen turnovers that turned into 30 points.

"Their game plan was simple: Shoot as many 3s as possible, and get into transition as often as possible. For us to foul 25 times to their 12, that's the story. They just played a really clean game."

Kerr and Green both harped on the fact that even the deep bench Memphis players had made it to the NBA, so they have talent to compete. Green said the Warriors have to have pride in themselves and treat every team—no matter who is available—

AP

Memphis Grizzlies forward Jaren Jackson Jr. (13) drives between Golden State Warriors forwards Trayce Jackson-Davis, left, and Dario Saric (20) in the second half of an NBA basketball game Monday, Jan. 15, 2024, in Memphis, Tenn.

with the same intensity.

The game was close throughout with neither team holding a double-digit lead in the first three quarters. Memphis went on a 10-1 run in the fourth to lead 110-98 with four minutes left, enough for Memphis to snap its two-game losing streak.

The game was the annual celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day for the Grizzlies. The civil rights icon was killed by an assassin's bullet in 1968 on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel, a short distance south of FedExForum where the Grizzlies play their home games.

There was a smaller-than-expected crowd for the game due to temperatures in the teens and about 6 inches of snow in Memphis. The Grizzlies—anticipating the small crowd—announced two hours before the game that any ticket-holder unable to attend because of the wintry conditions could exchange their tickets for one of the next three home games—Jan. 23 against Orlando, Jan. 29 against the Sacramento Kings or Feb. 1 against the Cavaliers.

## 76ERS 124, ROCKETS 115

**PHILADELPHIA** (AP)—Joel Embiid returned from his latest injury to score 41 points and grab 10 rebounds in Philadelphia's win over Houston.

Embiid had his 16th straight 30-10 game. Tyrese Maxey added 27 points for the Sixers.

Alperen Sengun led the Rockets with 19 points. Dillon Brooks scored 18.

The 29-year-old Embiid missed the previous three games with left knee inflammation (the 76ers went 1-2). He had played just two games this month after missing all four on the 76ers' holiday road trip. The Sixers are 3-7 this season without Embiid, the reigning NBA MVP and two-time defending league scoring champion. He entered Monday leading the NBA in scoring at 34.6 points per game.

## MAVERICKS 125, PELICANS 120

**DALLAS** (AP)—Kyrie Irving scored 42 points, Tim Hardaway Jr. had 41 and Dallas split a two-game home set with New Orleans.

The second game in franchise history with two 40-point scorers came with superstar Luka Doncic missing his third consecutive game due to a sprained ankle. Irving and Doncic combined for the other such game in March.

Zion Williamson scored 30 points but was 6 of 11 on free throws, including a miss with 17 seconds left when he had a chance to get the Pelicans even after Dallas fouled him on purpose.

The Mavericks were down seven midway through the fourth quarter before Hardaway hit consecutive 3-pointers to give them a 112-111 lead. Hardaway finished one point off his career high.

CJ McCollum scored 23 points for the Pelicans.

## CELTICS 105, RAPTORS 96

**TORONTO** (AP)—Jayson Tatum had 19 points and 14 rebounds, Jrue Holiday and Derrick White each scored 22 and Boston won its eighth straight meeting with Toronto.

Kristaps Porzingis added 15 points and Al Horford had 10 points and 11 rebounds as the Celtics completed a four-game season sweep of their Atlantic Division rivals.

RJ Barrett scored 24 points and Immanuel Quickley had 21 in the Raptors' fourth consecutive loss.

Boston forward Jaylen Brown sat out because of a hyperextended right knee. Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla said Brown is dealing with soreness but the injury is not considered serious.

The Raptors were without guard Gary Trent Jr. (flu-like symptoms) and center Jakob Poeltl (sprained left ankle). Toronto shot a season-worst 4 for 32 from 3-point range.

## JAZZ 132, PACERS 105

**SALT LAKE CITY** (AP)—Lauri Markkanen had 32 points and 10 rebounds, Collin Sexton scored a season-high 30 and Utah routed Indiana for its sixth straight victory.

Markkanen made all 10 of his free throws and has scored 30 points or more three times in January.

Keyonte George had 19 points and Jordan Clarkson added 17 for the Jazz, who shot 55.6% and led wire-to-wire for the second time this season. Utah (22-20) has won nine straight at home by an average of 16.8 points.

Buddy Hield and Andrew Nembhard each scored 14 for the Pacers, who played their fourth game without injured Tyrese Haliburton (left hamstring).

## MAGIC 98, KNICKS 94

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Paolo Banchero had 20 points, Cole Anthony scored 10 of his 15 in the fourth quarter and Orlando beat New York to stop a three-game skid.

Wendell Carter Jr. added 17 points for the Magic, going 7 for 11 off the bench after missing five games with right knee tendinitis.

The Magic trailed by 11 in the third quarter but took charge midway through the final period. They grabbed the lead for good at 90-89 when Anthony tipped in a missed shot with 3:45 to play.

Deuce McBride scored a career-high 20 points in a second straight start in place of Knicks guard Jalen Brunson, who has a bruised left calf. OG Anunoby added 17, but Julius Randle shot just 5 for 18 and was held to 15 points.

## CAVALIERS 109, BULLS 91

**CLEVELAND** (AP)—Donovan Mitchell scored 34 points, Jarrett Allen had 10 points and 14 rebounds for his ninth straight double-double, and Cleveland pulled away from Chicago late.

Caris LeVert added 16 points, seven rebounds and seven assists off the bench as the Cavaliers extended their longest winning streak of the season to five, despite blowing a 21-point lead in the second half. Cleveland closed out the game on a 29-10 run.

Cleveland made 20 3-pointers in a franchise-record 57 attempts—an NBA season high in regulation.

Nikola Vucevic had 17 points and 10 rebounds for the Bulls. Coby White scored 18.

Cleveland is 10-3 since learning it will be without power forward Evan Mobley (left knee surgery) and point guard Darius Garland (broken jaw) until sometime in February.

## HEAT 96, NETS 95, OT

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Jimmy Butler returned after missing seven games with a sprained toe and scored 31 points, including two free throws with 11.8 seconds left in overtime to help Miami beat Brooklyn.

Tyler Herro had 29 points and 11 rebounds, and Bam Adebayo added 11 points and 20 boards in the Heat's third consecutive win.

Mikal Bridges scored 26 points and Cam Thomas added 23 for Brooklyn. The Nets have lost three straight and eight of nine.

## PISTONS 129, WIZARDS 117

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—Alec Burks came off the bench to score 34 points and Detroit beat Washington for only its fourth win of the season.

Jalen Duren had 20 points and 19 rebounds, and Jaden Ivey added 24 points, seven rebounds and six assists to help the NBA-worst Pistons (4-36) snap a seven-game losing streak. Burks went 8 of 12 from 3-point range as Detroit shot almost 56% from the field.

Tyus Jones had 22 points, seven assists and six rebounds to lead the Wizards (7-32).

The game came one day after the teams made a trade, with the Pistons agreeing to send Marvin Bagley III and Isaiah Livers to the Wizards for Danilo Gallinari and Mike Muscala. The Pistons also will send two future draft picks to Washington.

## HAWKS 109, SPURS 99

**ATLANTA** (AP)—Trae Young sank his first six 3-point attempts in Atlanta's victory over San Antonio.

Young had 36 points, passing 10,000 for his career, and 13 assists. Dejounte Murray, the former Spurs guard who has been discussed in trade speculation, added 13 points and a season-high 13 rebounds.

Atlanta opened the second quarter with 11 straight points to lead 46-16 and extended it to 69-34 at halftime.

But the Spurs closed to 99-93 behind Victor Wembanyama, who had nine dunks. The 7-foot-3 rookie scored 26 points with 13 rebounds after sitting out the second game of a back-to-back Saturday, a 122-116 loss to Chicago.

The Hawks had lost two straight and four of five.

## LAKERS 112, THUNDER 105

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—Anthony Davis had 27 points and 15 rebounds, LeBron James scored 25 and the Los Angeles Lakers snapped the Oklahoma City Thunder's four-game winning streak with a 112-105 victory Monday night.

D'Angelo Russell had 14 points and seven assists as the Lakers held off the powerhouse Thunder in the fourth quarter for only LA's sixth victory in 18 games, with two of those wins coming against Oklahoma City.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 16 of his 24 points in the first half while playing through a right knee sprain for Oklahoma City. The Lakers are responsible for two of the Thunder's four losses in their last 16 games.

Jalen Williams scored 25 points, but Chet Holmgren and Josh Giddey both struggled offensively to a combined 17 points for the Thunder, who opened a key four-game swing against some of the West's other top teams. Oklahoma City also faces the Clippers and the conference-leading Timberwolves on its trip.

James returned from his fourth missed game of the season due to injury and scored 17 points in the second half. His driving layup with 8:53 to play staked Los Angeles to the game's first double-digit lead at 93-82.

# Osaka's Grand Slam comeback ends in 1st-round loss to Garcia

**MELBOURNE, Australia** (AP)—Moments after her Grand Slam comeback ended in a first-round loss, Naomi Osaka walked back through the players' tunnel where her name has a prominent place among recent Australian Open champions.

Three matches into her return from 15 months off the tour, and six months after the birth of her daughter, Shai, Osaka lost 6-4, 7-6 (2) to 16th-seeded Caroline Garcia in a tight encounter at Rod Laver Arena on Monday night.

"The competitive in me is really frustrated that I'm not winning these matches, of course," Osaka told a post-match news conference. "So I wouldn't say, like, this comeback is how I thought because I'm delusional enough to think I could have won the tournament."

She smiled, before adding: "I think my delusion is what allows me to win the tournaments."

Osaka won the U.S. Open in 2018 and 2020, and the Australian title in 2019 and '21. This was the first time she lost in the first round in Melbourne, where she made her debut in 2016.

She took time out from tennis for her own wellbeing after first-round exits at the French Open and U.S. Open in 2022. She's not planning any more breaks for now.

"Yeah, I think I just have to keep living day by day and training hard and playing a lot more matches," she said. "And hopefully my dreams will come true."

The big-serving Garcia didn't give Osaka a look at a break-point in the match. Most of the rallies were short—only three longer than nine shots. The bulk were less than four. Most of the service holds were comfortable—except for Osaka's one dropped game in the first set. That was all the difference.

"I have a lot of respect for Naomi as a person and as a player—15 months she's been away," Garcia said. "I'm very glad to see her back. Six months after giving birth, she's playing quite amazing already. We have to watch out."

Osaka was one of three past Australian Open champions who returned to play at Melbourne Park for the first time as moms, joining 2016 winner Angelique Kerber and 2018 champion Caroline Wozniacki.

The Australian Open started Sunday and will be played over 15 days for the first time, with the first round spread over three days in a bid to cut down on the late-finishing matches.

Still, it was 1:39 a.m. local time by the time Felix Auger-Aliassime closed out a 4-hour, 59-minute win over 2020 U.S. Open winner Dominic Thiem that finished 6-3, 7-5, 6-7 (5), 5-7, 6-3. That match was briefly held up in the fourth set by a bird landing on the court at Margaret Court Arena and having to be chased off by a ball kid to laughter from the crowd. It then flew around the stadium briefly before play could continue.

For Auger-Aliassime, the win ended a run of first-round exits at three consecutive majors.

In the opening match on Rod Laver, U.S. Open champion Coco Gauff needed just 60 minutes to advance 6-3, 6-0 over Anna Karolina Schmiedlova.

The 19-year-old Gauff, who won her first major at the U.S. Open in September, said she had increased confidence in her serve thanks to some advice from Andy Roddick.

Fourth-seeded Gauff dropped just one point on her serve in the second set and credited Roddick, saying "he's probably one of the best servers in history."

Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova didn't make it past the first round, losing 6-1, 6-2 to Dayana Yastremska and struggling with a hip injury.

A third 16-year-old reached the second round, with Mirra Andreeva beating 29-year-old Bernarda Pera 7-5, 6-2 to set up a second-round match with sixth-seeded Ons Jabeur, a three-time runner-up at Grand Slams.

Alina Korneeva and Brenda Fruhvirtova, both also 16, advanced after their first Grand Slam main draw wins on Sunday.

"I'm really excited for this," Andreeva said about playing Jabeur. "I said many times before that she's the player that I was looking up to. I really like the way she plays. I'm sure it's going to be a great match."

Australia's newest top-10 player, Alex de Minaur, advanced after past Wimbledon finalist Milos Raonic retired from their match. De Minaur was leading 6-7 (6), 6-3, 2-0 when the big-serving Canadian retired with an injury.

Third-seeded Daniil Medvedev, the 2021 and 2022 finalist at Melbourne Park, also advanced when his opponent retired from their match.

Medvedev had dropped the first set but was leading 5-7, 6-2, 6-4, 1-0 when the 22-year-old Terence Atmane quit because of cramps.

"When I was feeling tired in the third set, I looked up the other end and saw he was cramping," Medvedev said. "The conditions were fine but it has not been hot these seven days and then it was hot today, so you get more stressed."

Stefanos Tsitsipas, who lost last year's Australian final to Novak Djokovic, advanced with a 5-7, 6-1, 6-1, 6-3 win over Zizou Bergs.

Stan Wawrinka, who won the 2014 Australian title, was beaten 6-4, 3-6, 5-7, 6-3, 6-0 by Adrian Mannarino. That left 10-time winner Djokovic as the only Australian champion left in the men's draw.

Five-time Australian Open finalist Andy Murray lost to Tomas Martin Etcheverry 6-4, 6-2, 6-2 and said it might be the last time he contests the season's first major.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Naomi Osaka of Japan waves as she leaves Rod Laver Arena following her first round loss to Caroline Garcia of France at the Australian Open tennis championships at Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia, Monday, Jan. 15, 2024.

## HESS

*From page 20*

was a little bit on the dirt road. It was a beautiful course and a beautiful finish," he said.

When he was told he broke two course records, he was shocked and said he didn't know. "It feels nice! I hope someone, someday, someone who's living here will break it," he said.

The 37-year-old engineer and his wife first traveled to Saipan eight years ago while doing her language studies and returned this time around for work again. They are leaving this Thursday and said they have been sight-seeing and visiting friends. Hess said he would love to return to Saipan for another vacation.

For 13-year-old Taflinger, she said the course was nice with the downhill return to the finish line. On how she felt finally finishing three races in a row, she said, "I'm exhausted because all of the races have been so hard. Waking up early every morning was exhausting, and my legs are hurting really bad. I haven't rested them that much."

Her favorite course, she said, was the first day. "I haven't run that much on Beach Road and like since it was the first day, it wasn't that tiring."

As for her overall thoughts on her first Trinity race, she said, "It was fun and challenging because you don't get a day in between for a break. So, it's really [fulfilling] to finish because it's like a hard race."

Results of the overall Top 10 in the men and women categories will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune.*

LEIGH GASES

Participants of Day 3 of the Run Saipan 2024 Trinity Race, Route 30 Drag Strip 5K pose for a photo at the finish line last Monday.

## BASA

*From page 20*

first game went to Man Amigos, who won over Team Wazzup, 8-4.

Man Amigos' Mark Toves, Joey Dela Cruz, and Manny Sablan all scored in the first inning off a three-RBI homer by Sablan.

Team Wazzup could not make contact with pitches made by Man Amigos' Jerry Deleon Guerrero, and they went scoreless until the fourth inning, when Cris George, Derek Aguon, and Eric Kani made it a 3-5 game.

Man Amigos still had the upper hand as a run scored in the fifth inning, and two runs came in the last inning from a home run by Eric Palacios and an RBI single by Deleon Guerrero.

Only one more run came for Wazzup and they said adios to the Amigos when they couldn't tie or take the lead before the game ended.

In other results, Hagu La'mun defeated Team Redmen, 12-4, off a productive third and fifth inning when Hagu La'mun brought in the majority of their runs.

Peliliu then handed Saipal their first loss, 18-7, in a run-mercy ruled game; Team Asahi beat Team Sufa in a low-scoring 6-2 game; and Tokahao blew Tuturamz out of the field, 17-3.

Results of the women's division will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune.*

## MARATITA

*From page 20*

Tenorio all have nine each; and Jess Mesa, Deleon Guerrero, Derek Aguon, Manibusan, Ton Pangelinan have seven each.

In the runs scored column, James Benavente has the most with 17; Aguon has 15; Takai scored 12; and Cartfield Sablan, Camacho, Jerome Delos Santos have 11 each.

Sablan, Manibusan, and Quitugua are tied with the most triples at two each; and eleven other players are tied with one each.

Bansil is still the only player to hit a home run.

Over on the pitching side, Pirates' J.J. Laniyo is the top pitcher with a clean slate of 0 ERA from six innings pitched in three games, allowed only three hits and has 0 ER, and has one win.

Second is teammate Dung Tenorio who has a 0.78 ERA from three games and nine innings pitched. He has allowed one ER and eight hits and has a 2-0 record. Third is the Dodgers' Jeff Cruz with three wins, 1.17 ERA, from three games and 12 innings pitched and has allowed two ER and seven hits.

The most strikeouts made so far is 29 by Kevin Kapileo; Cruz is second with 19; Pete Sablan has 13; Joe Kapileo has 11; Tony Flores threw nine; Bill Camacho, Dung Tenorio, and Ton Pangelinan all have eight each; and Takai and Laniyo threw seven each.

**Allen, Bills dispatch Steelers in playoff game delayed a day by snow.**

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Saipan Tribune
# Sports

**Osaka's Grand Slam comeback ends in 1st-round loss to Garcia.**

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# Hess, Taflinger sweep Trinity series

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

From the snowy Alps to the sunny tropics, Swiss visitor Martin Hess blew all local runners out of the water as he swept the competition and set two new course records in the three-day Run Saipan 2024 Trinity Race last Martin Luther King Jr. weekend.

In the women's division, a young up-and-coming student-athlete Addalee Taflinger made her mark in the series as she swept all three race days as well.

The last race on Monday was the Route 30 Drag Strip 5K, with Hess setting a new course record with a sub-18 time of 17:57. Second was Jody O'Sullivan at 18:54; and third was Sildrey Veloria with a time of 19:31.

Taflinger came in at 24:39; Ann Bang overtook Shawna Brennfleck for second place at 25:44; and Brennfleck was third with 25:53.

Hess, who is visiting with his wife for two weeks, decided to join the race after his wife told him about it and the rest was history.

The third installment of the race, Hess said, was nice as it's a much flatter course than the steep Mt. Tapochau 5K race last Sunday, and much shorter than the 10K Beach Road course last Saturday.

He said this course, which was slightly uphill, was against the wind, while going down, it was with the wind, so it helped. As for the lead, he was running with three or four other runners and pulled away 1K into the race.

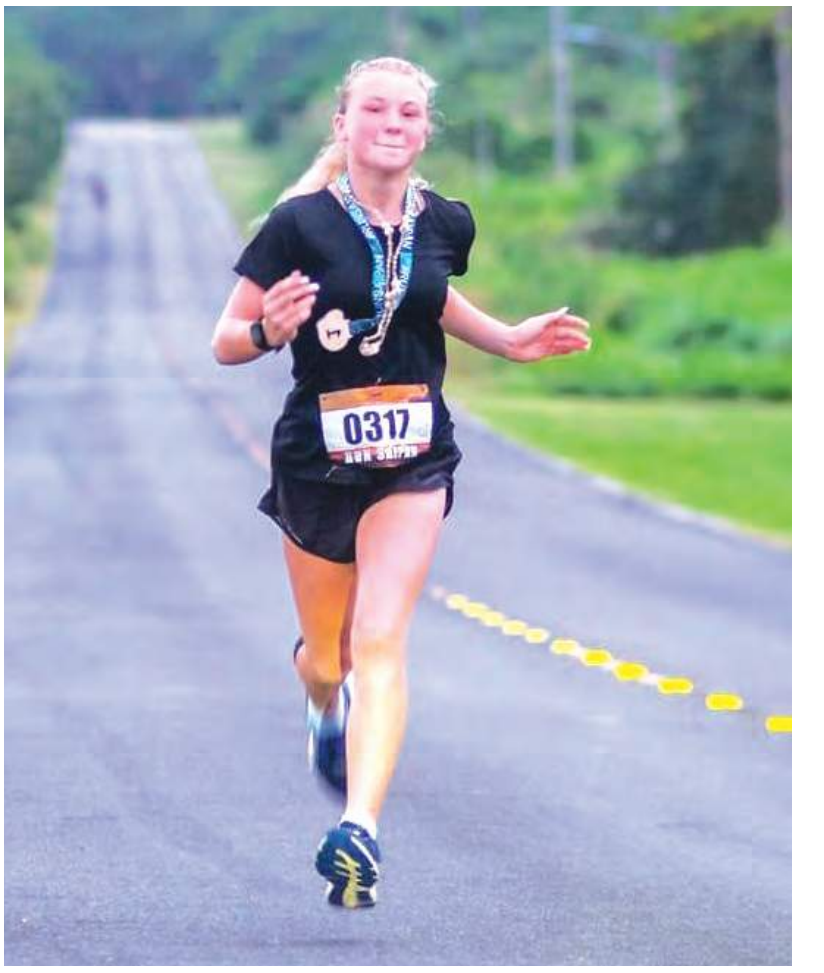
As for the experience of running three consecutive early races, he said, "I really liked it. I've never done this before and in the morning when I woke up, I'm like, 'oh no, I'm doing that.' I'm all still so sore, but in the moment when you're about to race, it's nice, because you feel like you've accomplished something."

His favorite race, he said, was the Mt. Tapochau 5K in which he also set a new course record. "We were up there with the sunrise, and the course

*See HESS on Page 19*

JONATHAN SUGATAN

Swiss runner Martin Hess runs into first place for the third day in a row last Monday, of the Run Saipan 2024 Trinity Race, setting two new course records—the Mt. Tapochau 5K and the Route 30 Drag Strip 5K.



JONATHAN SUGATAN

Saipan International School middle school student-athlete Addalee Taflinger swept all three races of the Run Saipan 2024 Trinity Race, and is seen coming into first place on Day 3—the Route 30 Drag Strip 5K laset Monday.

## Maratita atop 3 Masters League categories

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

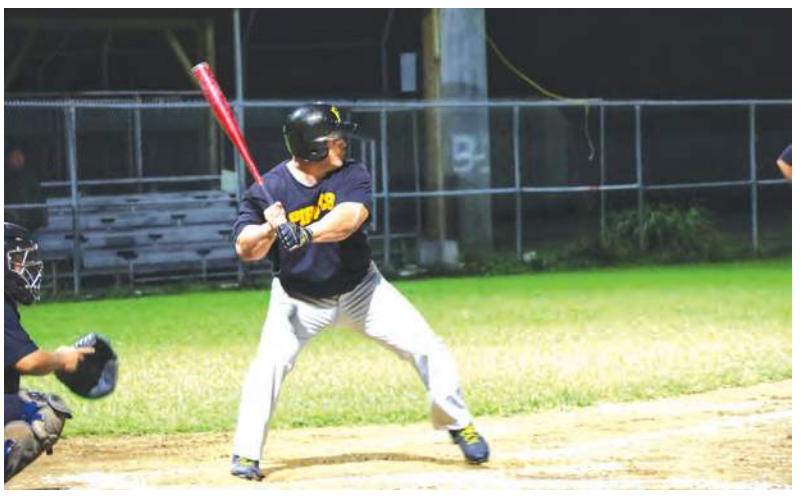
The undefeated Pirates' Audie Maratita is having a blast in the 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Masters League as he's atop three offensive categories as of Jan. 15.

Maratita leads all sluggers with a batting average of .667 from 12 hits in 18 plate appearances. Second to him is the Dodgers' Glen Camacho at .625 from 10 hits in 16 at-bats, and third is teammate Bruce Norita, who hit 11 out of 18 at-bats.

In the doubles category, Maratita leads with five; Ton Pangelinan has three; and Alvin Takai, Ben Pangelinan, Bruce Norita, Cris George, Ed Manibusan, Eric Palacios, J-Boy Deleon Guerrero, Jun Salalila, J.J. Teigita, Robert Bansil, and Shine Tenorio all have two each.

Maratita also hit the most RBIs with 15; second is Richard Quitugua with 10; Norita, Palacios, Pete Tomokane,

*See MARATITA on Page 19*



LEIGH GASES

The Pirates' Audie Maratita leads the 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Masters League in three categories as of Jan. 15.

## BASA league starts, donates $500 to DMS

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The 2024 master's and women's division of the Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association had its opening pitch last Sunday, and prior to that, donated $500 to Dandan Middle School.

The donation, which BASA also did last year, is for showing their appreciation to the school, which is adjacent to the field they play their softball games in. BASA president Leo Bobai, vice president McQueen Masaharu, secretary Elsie Ngewakl, and Timberley Ngewakl turned over the check to DMS principal James Sablan.

This season, there are 10 men's teams—Man Amigos, Tokahao, Team Sufa, Saipal, Hagu La'mun, Team Redmen, Peliliu, Team Asahi, Tuturamz, and Team Wazzup. In the women's division, there are six—Lady Blue Jays, Bat & Boujee, Boleras, 670 Magas Babes, Team BDE, and Lady Sufa.

In men's results last Sunday, the

*See BASA on Page 19*

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association vice president McQueen Masaharu, secretary Elsie Ngewakl, president Leo Bobai, treasurer Timberley Ngewakl, and Dandan Middle School principal James Sablan during BASA's $500 donation to the school.